HOW TO READ THE NEWS FROM BRITAIN *By Claude Cockburn*

NEW MASSES

FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY NOVEMBER 25, 1941

THE BATTLE OF THE LABOR-BAITERS

A report from behind the scenes in Washington by Bruce Minton. The southern bourbon-appeaser-Tammany coalition.

CAMPAIGN FOR THE CAUCASUS

A military analysis by Colonel T.

OUR COMMON CAUSE

Statements by outstanding Soviet intellectuals. Sergei Eisenstein, N. N. Burdenko, Serge Prokofieff, E. V. Tarle, Mikhail Sholokhov, O. J. Schmidt

THE CASE FOR BROWDER'S RELEASE

A Lawyer's Memorandum

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Between Ourselves

EVEN as we write this, on the eve of the CIO convention, the front pages of the nation's press are giving their right-hand columns to advance stories of the meeting, which may well be the most momentous labor gathering ever held in America. NM editor A. B. Magil is now in Detroit at the convention press table—his story of the issues involved, the discussions and personalities, the meaning of this convention for organized labor and all America, will appear in an early issue following the wind-up of the sessions. It will be a story that you won't want to miss.

Aside from our usual coverage of week-to-week developments, we have plans for a number of articles on special subjects — plans which we shall say more about when the pieces have reached the "in the making" stage. The most definite project is a

series by Barbara Giles, who sized up O'Dwyer in our November 4 issue, on the gallery of appeasers in Congress, beginning with the Hon. Hamilton Fish of New York.

An ardent admirer of Alvah Bessie has written us at some length about Samuel Sillen's review of Bessie's new novel *Bread and a Stone.* "Perhaps I should wait until I've read the book," he says, "but the truth is that I somehow didn't find out about its publication until I read Sillen's review. I was tremendously impressed by Bessie's *Men in Battle,* which stirred me more than anything else I had read about the Spanish civil war, and am delighted to find that he has another book out. Have sent for it pronto. I gather from Sillen's review that it's another swell job by an unusually swell author."

Ralph Ellison's short story "Mister Toussan" has been chosen by a Tennessee reader of NM as the best piece of brief fiction published thus far in 1941. "I don't care whether it gets an official first prize from the official first-prize committees or not," writes this correspondent. "I will continue to think it's tops and I'll bet more people than go to make up a dozen juries would agree with me. Not only is the dialogue wonderfully real—I've taken part in just such conversations, myself—but it has a sort of rhythmic quality, like something that might be given by a chorus. I read it over twice and liked it still better the second time. Please carry more stuff by this man—he's great. Incidentally, I always heard the last two lines of the rhyme with which Mr. Ellison opened his story as 'The monkey played the fiddle on the sweet potato vine.' I suppose, though, that there are different versions for different states or regions."

NM, which has published Ralph Ellison's works many times before, will soon print a lengthy review he has written of William Attaway's newest novel, *Blood on the Forge.* Attaway, together with Ellison, Samuel Sillen, and Roy Wilkins, editor of the magazine *Crisis,* will speak at the first session of a series, "Evenings with Negro Authors," held under the auspices of the Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature of the New York Public Library. The session will take place Thursday, November 27, 8 PM, at the Harlem Branch of the Public Library, 9 West 124th St., NYC. Admission is free.

Samuel Putnam, whose article "Philadelphia Story" appears on page 6, took time off from his studies of Latin America to tell these important if ugly truths about the ruling political machine of his native city. Mr. Putnam's article on the Negro in Latin America, the fourth in NM's series on "The Negro in American Life," will be published in a forthcoming issue. Herbert Aptheker, who is editing the series, is giving ten weekly lectures under the auspices of *Science & Society* on "The Constitution and the Law in American History." The lectures, which began October 23, are delivered weekly on Thursday at 8 PM, at Steinway Hall, 113 West 57th St. (Studio 601) NYC.

Continuing our occasional bulletins in these columns on how readers who want to help the Red Army directly can best do so: from World Tourists, Inc., which ships presents to the Far Eastern Front from American donors, we have news of a campaign by children to send 1,000,000 pounds of chocolate to 1,000,000 Red Army soldiers. The campaign, it seems ,was started by a youngster in Cleveland, O., who has drawn his classmates into the project and is enlisting other children far and wide. World Tourists reports that it has made arrangements so that a pound of chocolate, with a letter from the donor, can be placed in the hands of a Far Eastern soldier for the sum of forty cents, including the cost of the chocolate. Of course other children can, and do, send other gifts—socks, cigarettes, razor blades, preserves, and gloves are among the many presents which America's youngsters have already mailed or brought in to World Tourists (1123 Broadway, NYC) to be forwarded to the Soviet Union.

The model army camp revue which will be performed at NM's thirtieth annual Artists and Writers Ball has been christened *Kickin' the Panzer,* and material for it is being contributed by Lewis Allen, Earl Robinson, George Kleinsinger, Alex North, Mike Stratton, William Blake, Sol Aarons, Joseph Darian, Marc Blitzstein, and others. The ball will take place just two weeks from this coming Saturday (December 6) at Webster Hall. There will be dancing, as late as you want it, with music by a swing band that includes Sidney Bechet, Red Allen, Art Hodes, J. C. Higginbotham, Bud Freeman, Muggsy Spanier, Teddy Bunn, Roy Eldridge, and Sidney Catlett.

Who's Who

SAMUEL PUTNAM is an expert on Latin-American affairs — and a Philadelphian. . . . R. D. Prescott is the pen name of a New York lawyer. . . . Alfred Goldsmith and David Cosgrove have contributed reviews to NM before. . . . Michael Ames has written music criticism for a number of magazines.

THIS WEEK

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NEW MASSES

VOLUME XLI NOVEMBER 25 NUMBER 8

THE BATTLE OF THE LABOR-BAITERS

Bruce Minton reports on the dangerous tactics of the appeasement congressmen who are obstructing the fight against Hitler by clamoring for anti-union measures.

Washington (November 13)

THIS has been a week of drama, but just as much, it has been a week of the utmost confusion. On Armistice Day, last Tuesday, it was generally conceded that the Neutrality Act revisions, approved by the Senate, would coast through the House without great difficulty. But as though to negate this promise of a stronger national front against Hitlerism, the National Defense Mediation Board announced on the eve of the House neutrality debate its decision to deny the union shop to the United Mine Workers in the captive mines. Certainly, the decision encouraged the anti-laborites in Congress.

On the following day, Wednesday, the House began its debate, limited to eight hours in all. Abruptly the bolt was on. The southern Democrats, up to then supporters of the administration's foreign policy, joined the indecisive "liberals" (who at the last moment got cold feet in the face of America First pressure) and the isolationists in an effort to block repeal of those sections of the Neutrality Act which forbade American merchant ships' entering combat zones and belligerent ports. All at once, hope faded for a comfortable margin of victory as bumbling bourbons, office holders by courtesy of the poll tax, ranted against labor and thundered once again the stale libels against the "Reds." They studiously kept away from the real issues; lamentably, the administration supporters proved equally uninspired. So poorly were things going for a time that it looked as though the amendments might lose. The administration, caught off base, rallied as best it could. The President and Secretary Hull sent strong letters to the House. In the end, the amendments just squeaked through.

What happened? How serious are the implications of the House revolt, and how do matters stand now? Any discussion must necessarily begin with an apology: it is too soon yet to give clearcut, positive answers. A few weeks from now, these climactic days can be viewed in some perspective. But at present I can do no more than list a few facts, tell how things look down here in this maelstrom of excitement, and hazard one or two general impressions.

THE LABOR SITUATION cannot be dismissed as a problem in itself. For the defections in the House are intimately connected with the controversy over the captive mines. They are so interrelated that it is impossible to view one without the other, impossible to understand what certain congressmen are up to unless it is also understood what has been done to labor.

When the Neutrality Act was up before the Senate last week, Senator Tydings of Maryland made a speech elaborating and redecorating the previous rantings of his mentor, Senator Byrd of Virginia. Now Tydings' only claim to importance, for all his loudmouthed forensics, is that he was slated for the "purge" in 1938. What gave his talk some significance was that up to then he had gone along with the administration's foreign policy.

Tydings repeated his speech over the radio Sunday afternoon, four days before the House vote on Neutrality repeal, for home consumption. Thereupon, certain observers sat up and took notice. For Tydings was engaged in a neat political trick. Sometimes it is called "proposing a trade" and sometimes, in less polite language, it is called "blackmail." Stripping the senator's remarks of their cloying rhetoric, there remained a hard core of threat. The senator pointed out that he would withhold support from the administration until the President changed his attitude toward labor. So long as the unions were "coddled" (and Mr. Tydings, like Mr. Byrd and the rest of their tribe, lacked the courage and honesty to explain that when he said "coddled" he really meant "allowed to exist"), so long as the labor movement was not dealt with sternly, he could not see his way clear to favoring any further action by this country against the Hitler menace. Of course, Mr. Tydings upbraided Hitler in passing, but he gave far more emphasis to the pretty warning that if this nation did not smash the unions "then the biggest lynching party that ever descended on a capital should string our carcasses as ornaments on the telegraph poles of Washington."

In other words, here was an expressed eagerness to hamstring foreign policy unless and until labor in this country was done in once and for all. On Wednesday, in the House, Mr. Tydings' lyric was sung over and over again by southern reactionaries like Howard Smith, member of the Byrd machine in Virginia, Richards of South Carolina, and Sasscer of Maryland. With each rendition, the theme took on new embellishments; the blackmail price was raised to include not only the crushing of labor, but also the canceling of all social legislation, the end of "non-defense expenditures" (WPA, social security, NYA, farm benefits, and so on down the line). The bourbons, holding a semblance of a balance of power on the issue of foreign policy, and responding to the applause of Ham Fish and the northern appeasers, adorned in fine words the sentiments expressed in the November Economic Bulletin of the National City Bank: "Arbitrary restrictions on working hours, strikes, and repeated demands for higher wages are adding greatly to the cost of the defense program, and are as much a matter for public concern as failure to control costs in other directions." In addition, the congressional highwaymen paraphrased the bulletin which urged a program of tax the poor, make the people pay for the whole cost of the war, because ". . . taxes which take too large a share of profits tend to discourage economy and weaken employer resistance to whatever demands are made."

The origin of this particular blackmail plot has been traced to groups among big employers who fear for their great prerogatives. They are alarmed by the prospect of a just war against German fascism. So they hold out for assurances that the labor movement will be crippled first.

To their standard flocked the southern diehards, the appeasers, and nine Tammany henchmen. Their cause was strengthened by shortsighted and vacillating progressives, like Representative Coffee of Washington, who

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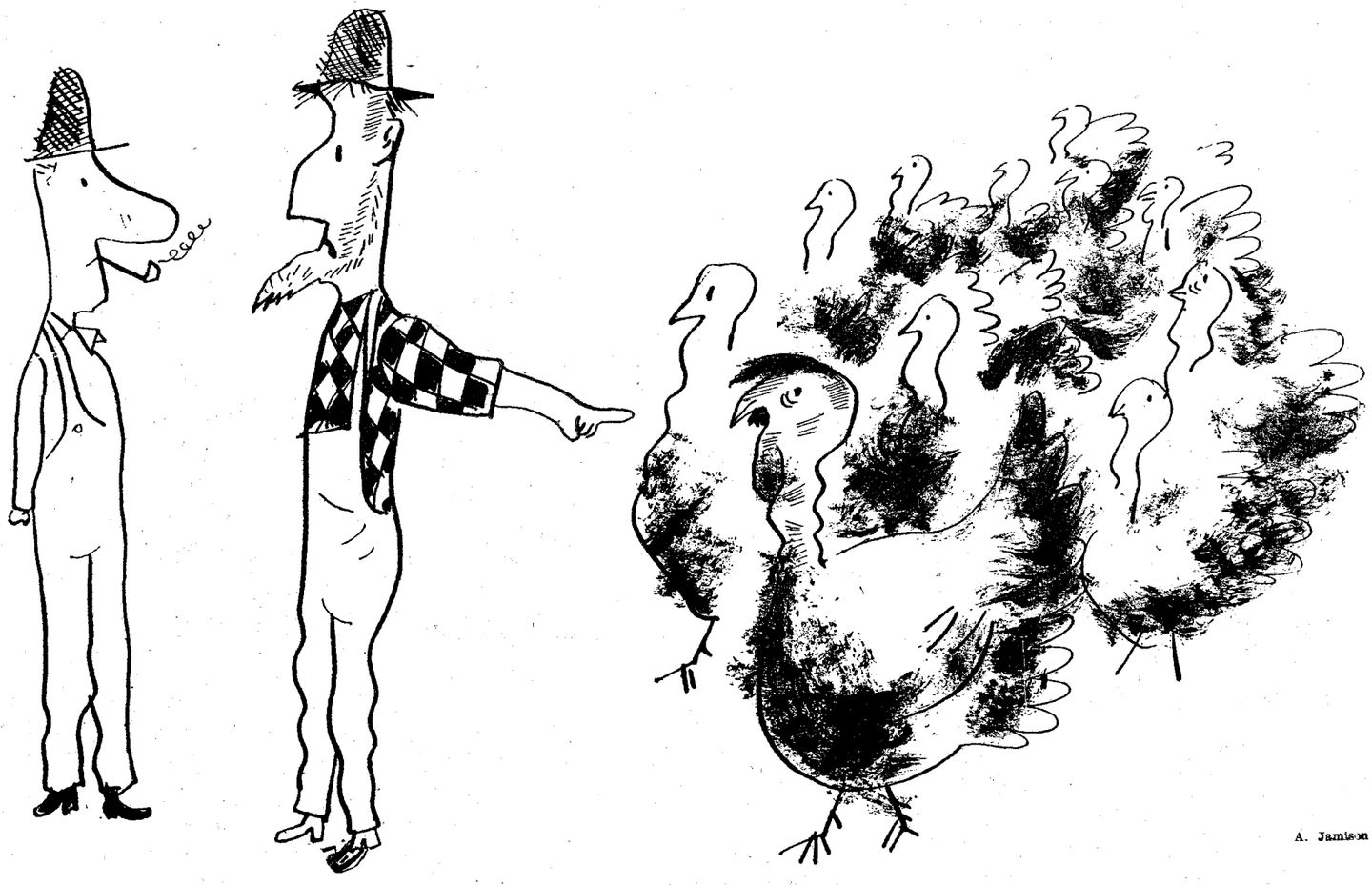

"There's something wrong with that one. It says goebbel, goebbel, goebbel."

were alarmed at the danger of an administration defeat and who sought safety by getting on the bandwagon. The whole motley crew abandoned their constituents, whose wishes counted for nothing. They had no interest in the overwhelming mass support of the President's program of smashing Hitler. And to whet the appetities of these headstrong men, the Mediation Board decided against the union shop. Like all appeasements, this sop not only failed to satisfy, but in truth encouraged demands for more. It would be oversimple to say that the Mediation Board's ruling was merely a response to congressional shouts against labor. But it would be just as incorrect to say that the clamor played no part.

The board, condemning itself by its own reasoning, gave plenty of evidence of its response to the labor-baiters in Congress. Yes, declared the nine majority members, "substantially ninety percent of the total annual production of bituminous coal is under union shop contracts and . . . in the open shop captive mines involved in this dispute, approximately ninety-five percent of the mine workers have voluntarily become members of the United Mine Workers." But just for that reason, and because the UMW is powerful, because postponement of the UMW demand for the union shop would not "seriously impair the security of the United Mine Workers," the board did not feel that "the signing of the union shop agreement by the operators involved in this dispute is necessary. . . ." Actually, the board as much as admitted that if the UMW had been weak, then it would have been granted the union shop.

Of course, no one—on the board, in Congress, in the labor movement, among the employers—doubted that this decision was directed against the entire labor movement. The Mediation Board and the reactionaries in Congress have delayed the winning of unity —and have actually acted to discourage labor support—by confronting the unions with a dilemma not of their making. The result is to disrupt the war effort and to obstruct the nation's security.

The harm done by the Mediation Board's capitulation to the owners of the captive mines, headed by Morgan's US Steel, goes still deeper. Friction between the CIO and AFL is aggravated by the understandable resentment of CIO members against the AFL bureaucrats on the board who deserted labor's cause to echo the employers. More than that, John L. Lewis, with his avid hostility to the President and to the administration's fight against Hitlerism, has gained a new talking point. Up to this week, Lewis was losing ground.

In this emergency there remains the administration's power to act in the interests of labor. Its whole foreign policy is running the risk of being impeded by the anti-union appeasement elements. There is real criticism to be made of the fact that the administration has not done enough to convince the people of their real stake in the war. True, the President and other high administration officials have talked to them over the radio. But other than that there has been no coordinated program of education. All the various information agencies, with the possible exception of the Treasury Department's radio program, have shown little ability to explain the reasons why Hitler and Hitlerism cannot be tolerated. The results are reflected in mail received by on-the-fence congressmen from America First groups, from the thousands misled by the Lindberghs and Wheelers. But the great millions who hate Hitlerism have failed in any numbers to write their congressman. Their voices have much to teach Congress.

BRUCE MINTON.

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HOW TO READ THE NEWS FROM BRITAIN

Things are not always what they seem. Claude Cockburn helps Americans gauge political events in London. A review of some speeches and debates in Parliament.

London (by cable).

WHAT with everyone saying there were quite certainly going to be some Cabinet changes and then Churchill saying there are going to be nothing of the sort; what with the announcement that we now have air parity with the Nazis but still apparently cannot open a second front anywhere, though nine-tenths of their force (whose totality is equal to ours) are in Russia; what with the extraordinarily slapdash official attempt to put the skids under the Labor MP Emanuel Shinwell, who is a major exponent of a strengthened "win-the-war" government, and the notable flop of that attempt when the press was through with it; what with all this, the outside observer is pretty apt to lose perspective on what is happening in Britain.

It will be useful, in fact it will be essential, if we are to get a balanced view of what the situation here is in general and the situation around the Cabinet is in particular, just to list a few of the most significant real facts about Britain in the past two weeks or so.

IF YOU were over here, and we could sit down for half an hour ticking off these facts on our fingers without bothering too much just what order of importance they come in, we should get something like this: first, the amazing Beaverbrook meeting at Manchester when the lord and Minister of Supply met the shop stewards. I mentioned that meeting a fortnight ago as one of the big events that was due to come off here. It did. And how.

Most significant point of all, of course, was that this is the first—and it will not be the last—time that a British Minister has publicly recognized the existence of the organized shop stewards as the most vital force in British war industry at this moment and gone out in the country to talk to them publicly. The recognition itself marks a big and important jump forward. I mentioned some time ago as one of the weaknesses in the situation the fact that Churchill really does not have very much understanding of the modern British working man—the skilled engineer, for instance. If he did he would refrain from foolish jibing at the Communists who—together with so many other forces—have supplied the backbone and muscles of the shop stewards' movement and of the whole drive for increased production.

And here is another point about the meeting at which Beaverbrook appeared. A comedy of discretions, if you like. Beaverbrook went there expecting that there would be an enormous outburst of demand for the second front. And it is no secret that Beaverbrook would have liked to have faced such a demand and come back to the Cabinet room with the news of it. Characteristically, at the other end of the business, the shop stewards' delegates were absolutely determined that nothing and nobody should be allowed to disrupt the meeting, or to give any excuse for the government to say that you cannot meet the stewards because they make an uproar about things you did not go to talk about. And Beaverbrook was only scheduled to discuss production.

We had just had the unfortunate experience of the big Trafalgar Square rally where Ellen Wilkinson was howled down by Trotskyists, and provocateurs masquerading as Communists. So the shop stewards decided that while they could raise the question of the *Daily Worker* ban—because the lifting of the ban is a matter of direct and vital importance in connection with the production drive—they could not raise the question of the "second front" because it might be said not to be "directly" connected with production. There was the noble lord hoping and praying for a tornado of "second front" demands whose strength he could report on to the Cabinet, and there were the serried ranks of the shop stewards, all of them desiring to raise the question of the "second front" but being so "discreet" that they never did.

I tell you that story in full because it is somehow humanly characteristic of our situation. But the big fact is that there was that meeting and that the newsreels of it are being shown all over Britain this week.

The second incident of the week: Churchill's announcement that we now have air parity with the Luftwaffe. Was there the expected outburst of enthusiasm over that? To be exact, not quite. Why not? Simply and solely because everyone felt in the back of their minds that while this is a grand thing, it would be a much easier thing to rejoice about if this long-sought parity were to be resulting in some major attack somewhere by our forces. And that is a significant and characteristic thing too. The British people are not satisfied even with such hugely encouraging statements as Churchill's about air parity. They are glad. But they look at the Eastern Front and say: "Good, and what do we do with it? When do we start?"

Third incident: Churchill's assurance on Japan.

Fourth incident: News of big British maneuvers in Malaya looking to a possible jungle war for the defense of the Burma Road.

Fifth incident: A sustained campaign in the London *Times,* backed by the *Sunday Observer,* to demand why the devil the government is taking so long about declaring war on Hitler's satellite states. The *Times* strongly suggests that the reason is that the British government is paying a great deal too much attention to allegedly reactionary American opinion on this subject.

Sixth incident: The fact that almost the entire press weighted its stories on the Shinwell-Alexander duel in the House in favor of Shinwell. (A. V. Alexander, first Lord of the Admiralty, took Shinwell to task for his outspoken criticism of the government in the matter of a second front.)

Now just why are these facts significant? How do they total? They total up to this: that slowly things in this country are moving in the proper direction. They mean more—once you accept the limitations of a political situation littered with the debris of a bad past—than the fact that once again Churchill has been unable to announce the Cabinet changes that people are asking for. They mean more than the fact that even now the people and the forces of audacity and of initiative are not able to compel the opening of the second front. But it would be a grave though very understandable mistake if you in America were to get bogged down so to speak in the details of our Cabinet and near Cabinet intrigues to such an extent as not to be able to see the fact that the thing really is moving. The intrigues around the Cabinet are important. But the disruptive elements—whether they work through the extreme right, the near fascists, the crypto-appeasers, the Trotskyites, or the sectarian bureaucrats still powerfully at large in the Labor Party—are working not with the stream but against it.

All this is very bad news for the Nazis. It is bad news for any Nazi agent or sympathizer in any country, and particularly in the United States, who hopefully considers that perhaps, because we have not yet got the second front and because we have not yet got the strengthened Cabinet that is needed, we are not getting anywhere in the direction of these objectives. I say with all possible deliberation that that is not true. The very sharpest criticisms of the failure to create the second front and the failure to strengthen the Cabinet are justified. It is monstrous that the old gang should still cling to the jobs it does. It is a monstrous demonstration of the continued power and influence of the old gang. And yet with all that it is still true that the old gang are on the skids. And they know it. They may be able to do a lot of mischief yet. I expect they will. But you cannot look at the real facts of life in England today—not facts gathered from "the left" exclusively but facts from all sectors of the slowly developing national front—without seeing that it is not the patriots and the anti-fascists who are on the defensive. On the contrary. They are pressing the enemy hard. It is the appeasers and the do-nothings who are on the defensive. They are still holding their ground. But the forces of victory are becoming stronger and more unified day by day.

CLAUDE COCKBURN.

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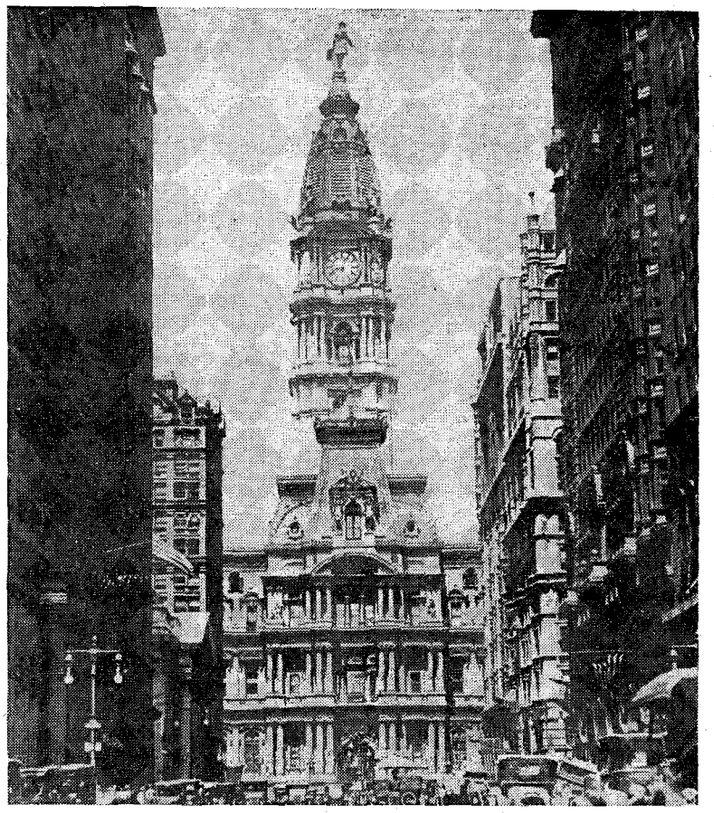
Philadelphia Story



Samuel Putnam explains why the third largest city in America provides its inhabitants with water commonly called a "Scoogle highball." Playing politics with the people's health. Shame of a great city.

IT SOMETIMES takes an outsider, a visiting stranger or some one with a bit of perspective, to jar a community out of its self-complacency and cause its members, if only for a fleeting second, to see themselves as others see them. Philadelphia has recently been exposed to two such jolts. One came not long ago, when President Roosevelt, without mincing his words, declared that the city's drinking water was "a stench in the nostrils of the nation" and was endangering national defense in the Philadelphia area. The other was handed us when that effervescent and inimitable Irishman, Mike Quin, came to town, took one whiff (from the railway station) of the Schuylkill River, which is the source of our water supply, and promptly dubbed it the "Scoogle River." The "Scoogle" it shall be forevermore.

Now, it is not to be presumed that any preponderant number of the nearly 2,000,000 Philadelphians are readers of Mike Quin's *Daily Worker* column; but Mike is a master of word coinage, and a phrase like that has a way of traveling. In the past it has been a standing joke among us to refer to a glass of water as a "chlorine cocktail." But since Mike's visit it has become a "Scoogle highball." For that word "Scoogle," somehow, seems to sum it all up: not merely the stench that rises from the Schuylkill, wafted for miles when the breeze is right (and far, far worse than the odor of the Chicago stockyards on a windy day); not only the filth and human sewage which fills the river, and which we must consume over and over again at our water taps; but the even greater filth and stench found in the neighborhood of the Republican-appeaser-dominated City Hall, beneath the blushing statue of William Penn.

The fact that we Philadelphians can pass the matter off with a jest is in itself a very bad sign. "Corrupt and contented" is the phrase that has been applied for years to the "city of brotherly love," and we have come to laugh at that, even—as if it were something to laugh about! At long last, however, a light is beginning to break through our benighted sophistication and our wisecracking civic indifference. Philadelphians are finally beginning to see just who the forces are behind this "Scoogle" stench. Like their O'Dwyer-Tammany Hall parallels in New York City, the ward-heeling politicians who give us this drinking water, along with our unspeakable slums, our fire traps, our waterless fire plugs, our lightless streets, our robber gas rates and streetcar rates, our thousands of undernourished school children, our pitiful health services—these are, precisely, the forces that are working, all but shouting, for a Hitler victory; they are the forces openly lined up with the America First Committee and the Lindbergh betrayers.

That this is so, is definitely shown by the jubilation with which the recent more-than-dubious Republican victory at the polls was greeted at the America First "rally" held here on November 5. To an audience that was one-third empty seats, the speakers boasted that the President's foreign policy had been "repudiated" by the voters, in returning to office the same old gang of "Scoogle" henchmen. (Incidentally, the courts have impounded the ballots, and the official results of the election are, at this writing, not yet known. The lukewarm Democrats, who failed to put up a fight on any vital issue, claim that the election was stolen outright, and the returns, certainly, were suspiciously close.)

Meanwhile, we Philadelphians really would like a decent glass of water for a change. So would the thousands who have come here to work in our defense industries, and whose health, as the President pointed out, is being seriously menaced. A glass of drinkable water. It seems little enough to ask; but it is too much to ask of our "city fathers," apparently. Not even an epidemic of dysentery, such as occurred some years ago, and which local physicians said was caused by the sewage that we drink, can prod them into action.

After all, so runs their reasoning, what have they to fear? Have they not been in power for fifty-odd corruption-filled years, as part of the notorious Boies Penrose-Pew-Grundy machine which has made Pennsylvania politics the disgrace of the nation? When they get in a tight spot, as they have repeatedly shown, there are ways and ways of "winning" an election. But one of their best allies, unfortunately, is an indifferent electorate—did not some 400,000 voters, or approximately thirty-eight percent of those registered, stay away from the polls this year? Did not Philadelphia labor put up a half-hearted, last-minute fight, while the Democrats, in the name of "party unity" (not national unity), were busy appeasing the appeasers within their ranks?

What, then, does it mean to the City Hall gang, when a report such as that by the Interstate Commission of the Delaware River Basin is turned in? The report in question, on "Pollution Control," issued in January 1940, contained the statement: "The Philadelphia-Camden metropolitan district is responsible for the Delaware River's reputation as *the most grossly polluted water area in the nation.* With Philadelphia drawing half of its water supply from this source, it follows that *no*

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other large city in the nation has an equivalently polluted source of water supply." [Italics mine—S. P. It may be remarked that the Schuylkill River is a tributary of the Delaware.]

CONFRONTED WITH SUCH FACTS as these, the local Republican plunderbund shrugs them off with the assertion: "Philadelphia's drinking water is treated with chlorine, and is therefore perfectly fit to drink"—which is what Mike Quin means by "a bad taste on top of a bad taste." They will even dig up a military "authority" or two to prove their point. But the Interstate Commission does not agree with them. Neither do the Philadelphia doctors. There are those recurring epidemics of dysentery. There's a mild one on right now. And it hardly takes a medical man to see that the very proximity of an open sewer like the Schuylkill, whether you drink the water that comes from it or not, is enough to imperil the health of the city.

Once in a long while things get so bad that an abortive gesture has to be made. In February 1940, it was announced that the $6,000,000 collected in water rents would go to provide better water; but only $2,000,000 was actually spent for the purpose; the remaining $4,000,000 went to the city's gilt-edged bondholders—the Main Line crowd and the Morgan banks—as payment on principal and interest, just as does fifty-seven cents out of every tax dollar collected in this municipality. About a month later, in March 1940, an ordinance was passed authorizing the city to borrow $18,000,000 to improve the water supply. But the money has not been borrowed; not a move has been made in this direction.

The "Scoogle highball," however, is not by any means the only thing that the long-suffering citizens of Philadelphia have to put up with. This third largest city in the nation, tenth largest in the world, sprawling over more than 129 square miles, has been declared by housing experts to have *the worst slums to be found anywhere.* More than 81,000 families, or more than 300,000 persons, according to these experts, are living in "substandard conditions." More than 250,000 have no private toilets. In the Negro tenement districts scattered over the city, the outdoor toilet and the open cesspool are frightful sources of typhus and other infection. The firetrap slum houses, together with water hydrants that give no water in case of fire, have resulted in numerous tragedies. In January of this year two men and a boy were burned alive as the firemen vainly rushed about for water. This was but one of what the papers described as "an epidemic of fires," which took the lives of seventeen persons in one month.

The housing situation is rendered still worse by the 25,000 or more families of defense workers that have moved or are moving in. In this connection, the federal government proffered its aid by offering to put up $19,000,000, to build low-cost homes for 20,000 workers. The offer was declined with thanks! The real estate interests must be served.

It is the same story in every phase of our civic life. Every time that we board a street car, we pay three cents out of an eight-cent fare to the famous "underliers"—meaning certain "first families" and financial interests which, back on the threshold of the Mauve Decade, simply took over our streets in the guise of a "franchise" and have been charging us for it ever since. And now, despite the fact that the transit company is making millions and always manages to pay its preferred stock (not the common stock) holders their dividends, it is planning to raise the fare to ten cents a ride or three rides for a quarter, which amounts to fifteen dollars a year more than the garden variety New Yorker pays for his transportation.

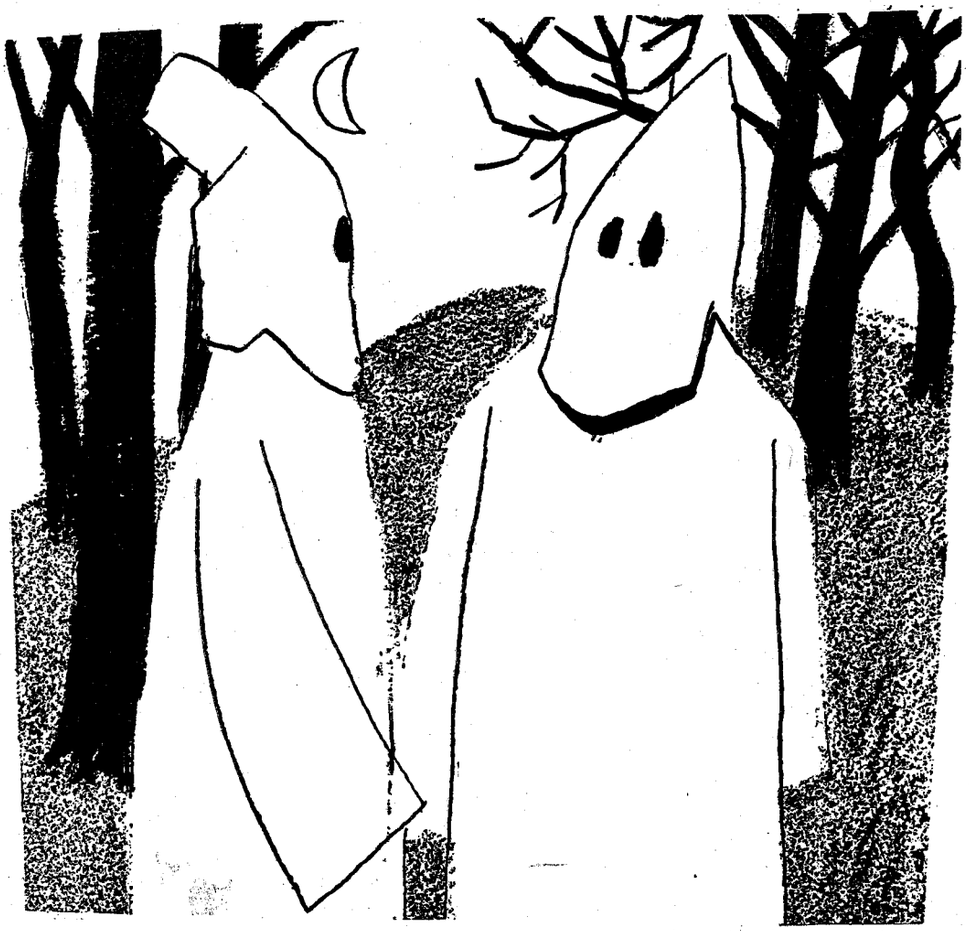
Or supposing we glance, if we have the heart, at our gas bill. The meter may read 400 or 600 cubic feet, but we have to pay for a minimum 800, or seventy-five cents. The gas company made a net profit in 1940 of $26,635,784; yet it is so poor that it cannot afford to repair its mains, and the result last spring was a disastrous explosion in a South Philadelphia street, that killed five persons and injured thirty. Philadelphia streets at night are in semi-darkness, yet the city council turned down a request for $500,000 to provide more adequate lighting. In these dark streets women have been attacked and slugged and holdups and juvenile crime are on the increase.

As to Philadelphia's public health services, the figure of $32,000 allotted for tubercular children—when in the center of the city seventeen out of every 1,000 persons are suffering from the disease—speaks for itself. Four child hygiene physicians are provided for a population of 1,951,000. At least 100,000 public school children are victims of malnutrition, many of them being too weak to attend classes; yet when the federal government recently offered to throw open its warehouses and provide food for them, both the city council and the school board opposed such aid, on account of the trifling cost which they would have to bear in distributing the school lunches. Shamed by a newspaper "crusade," they hemmed and hawed and insisted on a "survey." It now appears that they are being forced to take some action, but it remains to be seen how far they will go.

And these are the men who rule the city of William Penn. They are the ones who not long ago had the Communist Party thrown off the ballot, because, they alleged, the Communists sought "to overthrow the government by force and violence." Under their regime, violence has become a commonplace of our daily lives. The government of Philadelphia was overthrown half a century ago. It is about time that it was being restored; and there are signs that it is going to be, as the anti-Hitler forces gather strength, and as they come fully to realize that corruption and appeasement go hand in hand.

We will not put up with the "Scoogle" forever.

SAMUEL PUTNAM.



"Have you seen Ham Fish around?"

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A LAWYER LOOKS AT THE BROWDER CASE

A legal memorandum discussing precedents in American jurisprudence for executive action. The attitude toward other passport cases. Why he should be freed.

HUNDREDS of thousands of Americans have put their signatures on petitions urging the freedom of Earl Browder. Every category of the people is represented in the growing demand for his release: trade unionists, public figures, working men and women who feel strongly that something less than the national tradition of fair play operated in this case. They urge that executive action right the injustice that has been done. Therefore, it is appropriate at this time to examine the tradition of executive action to ascertain how it applies in the Browder case.

Earl Browder, secretary of the Communist Party, was sentenced to four years in a federal penitentiary on the charge that he had violated—on two counts—the provisions under Section 220, Title 22, of the United States Code. Contrary to a cultivated misconception, no issue of false passport was involved. The use of the passport in 1937-38—the period in question—was deemed criminal only because Mr. Browder, when applying for a passport in 1934, used the word "none" in replying to a question on the application blank in a way which was later construed to mean that he had never had a passport. This was admittedly the sole charge. The passport he was penalized for using was not false or defective, and this is admitted. No issue of moral turpitude was raised against him; and the government conceded that no question of moral turpitude was involved.

Although no one was harmed, and the government itself conceded the absence of any moral turpitude, a sentence was imposed that far exceeds any penalty in comparable or even graver cases, including passport stealing and outright forgery. Normally a case in the category of petty offenses drawing suspended sentences or somewhere between thirty and ninety days, Browder was given the incredible sentence of four years and $2,000 fine.

The four-year sentence is the total of two terms of two years each (i.e., on *each* of the two counts) *which were directed to run consecutively rather than concurrently.* This in itself is a shocking departure from settled judicial policy in imposing penalties upon multiple counts in an indictment. Where the circumstances are as closely connected in origin, character, and commission as in Browder's case, the long established practice is to treat them for purposes of punishment as a single offense. This is done by prescribing that separate terms, if imposed at all, run concurrently and *not* consecutively, even though in form the indictment alleges separate counts. The Browder case was unquestionably within this principle of rudimentary justice. Here was the *same* passport, issued upon the *same* application, containing the *same* declaratory item in question and used, though at different times, in precisely the *same* way. Yet, in disregard of the settled policy governing imposition of criminal sentences, the two-year terms—each grossly excessive by every unbiased standard—were directed to run consecutively.

Contrast this anomaly with the case of *Ulmer vs. United States 219 Fed. Rep. 641, 134 C.C.A. 127.* The defendant testified falsely three different times during bankruptcy proceedings. The last occasion was a week after the first two. He was indicted for perjury upon three separate counts. Reversing consecutive sentences upon each count and holding that all three acts constituted but one offense, the Circuit Court of Appeals sharply remarked, ". . . this conclusion seems to us inevitable, as one of practical necessity. The contrary would lead to the unthinkable result that if a witness had testified twice on the

same occasion to the same thing, and had been tried for perjury on the first statement and acquitted, he could still be tried and convicted upon the second statement." *(219 Fed. Rep. at p. 647.)*

The exceptional severity of the two-year term upon each count and the harsh direction that the terms run consecutively have combined to produce a judicial enormity which, so long as Earl Browder remains imprisoned, is a continuing reproach to American justice. It is for just such a situation that the power of executive clemency was designed. Its prompt exercise in this case would be an act of justice.

The President's clemency power is derived from Article 2, Section 2, of the Constitution. "The President shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offences against the United States, except in cases of Impeachment." It is amplified and implemented by a statute enacted in 1909, i.e. Section 568 of Title 18 of the United States Code:

Pardoning power. Whenever by the judgment of any court or judicial officer of the United States, in any criminal proceeding, any person sentenced to two kinds of punishment, the one pecuniary and the other corporal, the President shall have full discretionary power to pardon or remit, in whole or in part, either one of the two kinds, without, in any manner, impairing the legal validity of the other kind, or any portion of either kind, not pardoned or remitted *(R. S. E. 5330; Mar. 4, 1909, C. 321; 327, 35 Stat. 1151).*

Earl Browder was "sentenced to two kinds of punishment," i.e., to four years' imprisonment (corporal) and $2,000 fine (pecuniary). The fine was paid in full, which leaves the "corporal punishment" clearly within the statutory scope of the President's executive power.

BUT how have the courts interpreted this clemency power? What are its adjudicated scope and purpose? And, above all, what have been the criteria of its exercise, applicable to the circumstances of the Browder case? For this power, like every other under our constitutional scheme, has been shaped and conditioned by its experience in practice. The positive result has been at least the outline of a policy and, on the negative side, the decisive rejection of anything like merely personal prerogative. "A pardon in our days," wrote Mr. Justice Holmes for the unanimous Supreme Court in 1926, "is not the private act of grace of an individual happening to possess power. It is a part of the constitutional scheme." *(Biddle vs. Perovich 274, US 480, 486, 47 Sup. Ct. 664, 71 Law. ed. 1161)*

This had not been so always. In fact, Holmes here was pointedly rejecting Marshall's view of a century before when the old man—Federalist to the end—imputed to the executive pardoning power virtually all the attributes of royal prerogative. "A pardon," he wrote in 1833, "is an act of grace, proceeding from the power entrusted with the execution of the law. . . . It is the private, though official act of the executive magistrate, delivered to the individual for whose benefit it is intended, and not communicated officially to the court." *(United States vs. Wilson 7 Peters 150, 160-161)*

But to return to the Biddle case, Mr. Justice Holmes goes on to expound the high public purpose of the presidential pardoning power under the Constitution:

"When granted [i.e. a pardon], it is the determination of the ultimate authority that the public welfare will be better served by inflicting less than what the judgment fixed." *(274 US at p. 486)*

Two years before the Biddle case, Chief Justice Taft defined the purpose of the President's clemency power more explicitly, if less profoundly, than Holmes. "Executive clemency," wrote Justice Taft in 1924, "exists to afford relief from undue harshness or evident mistake in the operation or enforcement of the criminal law. The administration of justice by the courts is not necessarily always wise or certainly considerate of circumstance which may properly mitigate guilt. To afford a

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remedy, it has always been thought essential in popular governments, as well as in monarchies, to vest in some other authority than the courts, power to ameliorate or avoid particular criminal judgments." *(Ex parte Grossman 267 US 87, 120-121, 45 Sup. Ct. 332, 69 Law. ed. 527)*

IT IS DIFFICULT to conceive a case whose essential circumstances, more aptly than Browder's, fall within the scope of executive clemency power as thus defined by a Chief Justice who was himself a former President of the United States. No honest man or woman can contemplate the Browder sentence without concluding instantly that it is a glaring example of "undue harshness" induced by the political hysteria prevailing at the time.

A brief summary of other passport penalties will establish without further argument this "undue harshness" and the unquestionable appropriateness of executive clemency upon that ground alone, within the above-quoted sanction of Justice Taft in the Grossman case.

Of the 125 passport offenses in the Southern District of New York (which includes the port of New York where Browder was tried), thirty persons, or nearly twenty-five percent, drew suspended sentences; twenty-five, or twenty percent, were not even brought to trial; eight received fines only; twenty-eight, or a majority of the forty-eight prison terms imposed, were for three months or less, thirteen, for six months or less; suspended altogether were four one-year sentences; five of a year and a day, two of two years, one of three years, two of five years, and another of seven and one-half years. Of those who were sentenced to a year or more and who actually went to prison, seven received a year and a day, and two, eighteen months. This latter category comprises but six percent of the total in this federal district. Browder's four-year sentence is exactly two and two-thirds times heavier than the maximum imposed in the Southern District on any other passport offender who actually commenced his term. To quote again from Chief Justice Taft: "Executive clemency exists to afford relief for undue harshness or evident mistake in the operation or enforcement of the criminal law." Unless these words are meaningless, Browder, who has paid his $2,000 fine and has already served eight months, should be promptly released.

The following additional instances further illustrate the outrage of this sentence:

The Revel Brothers pleaded guilty in the Federal Court to using a fake passport to enter the United States. Although aliens, without legal right to a passport—unlike Browder, a native American legally entitled to come in with or without a passport—Messrs. Revel were merely fined $500 and given fifty days to pay it.

J. Mc. pleaded guilty to involvement in a passport racket with immigration officials. The sentence was eighteen months and the government officials got ninety days.

Mr. & Mrs. A. S., aliens here on leave, stole a passport. His two-year sentence was suspended on condition he leave the country. She was merely fined $100.

On three counts of perjury and fraud in obtaining a passport, G. B. received only one year and this eight years after jumping his bail.

F. G. pleaded guilty to using another's passport after altering the photograph on it, along with the certificate and seal of the State Department. The sentence was sixty days.

A. de A., charged under twenty-five counts with false statements in obtaining passports which he mutilated for use by others, received fours years on only one count. On four others sentence was suspended and the remaining counts were *nolle prossed,* i.e., withdrawn.

Even during the first world war, when the statute under which Browder was tried was first enacted as an anti-espionage measure, the record discloses a penalty standard which renders the Browder sentence even more outrageous. Attorney General Palmer testified before a Senate subcommittee that of the 218 persons prosecuted under what is now Section 220, Title 18, US Code, and related provisions of the Espionage Law, 203 received fines, suspended sentences, or terms of not more than one year. Of the remaining fifteen, six got a year and a day, six, two years, two, three years, and one got five years for using a fake passport to sell plans for a new gun to the German consul in Mexico City. The President ordered his release when about half the time was served.

EXECUTIVE and judicial policy coincide in frank recognition of the "undue harshness" of the sentence as a determining factor in the extension of clemency. Conceded by the courts as a residuum of power to alleviate judicial excess, the executive branch—perhaps because it is more frequently accountable to public sentiment—has not hesitated to exercise this power often and fearlessly and, in doing so, to assign "undue harshness" of the sentence as the moving cause. Thus, President Roosevelt, during his four-year incumbency as governor of New York, ordered the release of 164 persons. Twenty-nine were expressly released upon the ground of excessive penalty. A tabulation compiled from the four volumes of his *Public Papers as Governor* follows:

Year	*Releases*	*Ground—Excessive Sentence*
1929	27	7
1930	47	4
1931	41	11
1932	49	7

Three of the releases granted in 1932 are especially significant: Clyde Hale, sentenced Jan. 29, 1930, to one and one-quarter to two and one-half years for *second degree assault* plus five years *for being armed,* i.e., to seven and one-half years maximum, was released on Dec. 20, 1932, because—as Governor Roosevelt's memorandum states: "It was believed that the time he had served was adequate for the offense." Carl Bedient, sentenced December 1929 to ten years for *burglary,* was released Dec. 28, 1932, because "the judge and district attorney recognized that this sentence was excessive . . ." *(same).* Angela Vodola, sentenced Jan. 27, 1922, to thirty years for first degree robbery which necessarily involves the use of arms, was released Dec. 20, 1932, "because the sentence was excessive" *(same).*

Compare the gravity of these offenses—armed assault, burglary, armed robbery—to the ultra-technical infraction concededly devoid of moral turpitude for which Earl Browder has already served eight months of a four-year sentence and paid a $2,000 fine. Undoubtedly Governor Roosevelt's action in the three cases cited was amply justified on the records before him. How much more is it warranted in the Browder case where the sentence exceeds any penalty ever imposed in comparable passport violations!

A high watermark in the enlightened exercise of the clemency power was Alfred E. Smith's celebrated memorandum of Jan. 17, 1923, when, as governor of New York, he pardoned James J. Larkin. Larkin had been sentenced to five years on conviction under the New York Criminal Anarchy Act. *(Penal Law, Sec. 160, 161.)* In announcing the pardon, Governor Smith paid deference to "the great public interest aroused by this case [which] prompts me to state my reasons." *(Public Papers, Gov. Smith, 1923, p. 483.)*

Then, speaking as a Chief Executive, Smith defined the clemency power in terms identical with those of Chief Justice Taft in the Grossman case: "Executive clemency is the reserved power of the State, through the Governor, to mitigate the undue rigors of the law. . . ." *(p. 484)* "Undue rigors of the law," "undue harshness"—take your choice. Both terms obviously fit the Browder case.

Governor Smith, by three distinct references to the severity of Larkin's five-year sentence, assigns that as a major ground of the clemency extended: ". . . the safety of the State is affirmatively impaired by the imposition of such a sentence for such a cause" *(485)* ". . . it is a distinct disservice to the State to impose . . . such extreme punishment. . . ." *(p. 485)* And the following could with perfect appropriateness be applied to the Browder case.

> Stripped of its legalistic aspects, this, to my mind, is a political case where a man has been punished for the statement of his beliefs. From the legal point of view, it is a case where a man has received during the period of unusual popular excitement . . . *too severe a sentence for a crime involving no moral turpitude. (Public Papers of Alfred E. Smith, 1923, p. 485* [my italics]).

But this memorandum of Governor Smith predicates his exercise of the clemency power upon a much broader ground than even the undue severity of the Larkin sentence. And it is an important state paper because, as a whole, it expounds so enlightened an executive policy for the exercise of clemency in cases having a political content or aspect, which, whatever the formal character of the charge, the Browder case unquestionably has. At the very outset, the governor pays defer-

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ence to the compelling power of public opinion in such cases: "The great public interest aroused in this case prompts me to state my reasons," and ". . . the application for his release has the approval of many highly respected citizens. . . ." *But more important is the avowal of the basic truth that in times of stress the maintenance of civil liberties under our form of government depends in no small measure upon enlightened exercise of the clemency power. "I pardon Larkin," wrote Governor Smith, "not because of agreement with his views but despite my disagreement with them." (p. 484.)*

INSOFAR as the unprecedented severity of the Browder sentence may have been a judicial reflection of the widespread hostility then prevailing against the defendant's political views, Earl Browder's continued imprisonment presents a situation squarely within this salutary "civil liberties" principle which Governor Roosevelt's predecessor did not hesitate to apply to James J. Larkin in 1923.

Thirteen months before Governor Smith pardoned Larkin, President Harding used his executive power to release Eugene V. Debs from Atlanta Penitentiary. Debs was sentenced on Sept. 14, 1918, to ten years' imprisonment in the United States District Court of Northern Ohio upon conviction, under Section 3, Title I of the Wartime Espionage Act of June 15, 1917, as amended May 16, 1918, for publicly advocating to American soldiers that they resist and obstruct enforcement of the Selective Service Law. His conviction was affirmed by the United States Supreme Court and he commenced his sentence on April 12, 1919, in the Federal Penitentiary at Moundsville, West Va. He was later transferred to Atlanta. His term, with allowances for good conduct, was due to expire Dec. 28, 1925. On Aug. 11, 1922, he would have been eligible for parole. On Christmas Day 1921, he was ordered released by President Harding after serving two years and eight months of his ten-year term.

President Harding's brief memorandum, issued at the White House Dec. 23, 1921, pointedly declared that "but for his [Debs'] prominence . . . [he] very probably might not have received the sentence he did." Here again is evinced the potent effect of excessive penalty in determining the exercise of executive clemency. And the special New York *Times* dispatch from Washington on Dec. 24, 1921, ascribes to the President the statement that "the ends of justice have been fairly met in view of changed conditions." The special force of the analogy to the Browder case need scarcely be stressed.

In the same dispatch it was first made public that the President, sometime prior to the Debs release, had ordered a review of the case by the Department of Justice. The recommendations of the Attorney General on which he acted are contained in a thirteen-page memorandum to the President, dated Dec. 23, 1921, which has received little or no publicity though it was introduced into the *Congressional Record* by Senator Moses and ordered printed on Jan. 16, 1922. *(Sen. Doc. No. 113, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., Jan. 16, 1922, Cal. day, Jan. 17, 1922.)*

This document is, in several respects, remarkable. Applied to the essential circumstances of the Browder case, its effect is no less conclusive than the memorandum of Governor Smith in the Larkin case. In fact, it is even more emphatic in upholding, as a matter of executive policy, the function and purpose of the clemency power to redress the injustice of an excessive sentence. And it goes even further in recognizing the principle of *"unequal sentences"* as a valid test in defining the measure of penal severity that would justify and even require executive intervention. The official pronouncement of the Department of Justice on this point was occasioned by the argument strenuously urged in behalf of Debs that "the sentences imposed in this class of cases [Wartime Espionage] are grossly severe and unequal on persons committing the same offense." *(Sen. Doc. No. 113, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 8.)*

Assigned as a major ground for the clemency recommended, the Attorney General's concurrence in this argument based upon "unequal sentences" applies with equal force to the Browder sentence, whose gross disparity with other passport penalties has been already established:

> There is something in my opinion, however, to be said as regards unequal sentences which are bound to occur where persons are tried for substantially the same offense in different parts of our country and before different judges. Due to this, executive clemency has from time to time been extended to quite a number of this class of offenders. It is always desirable that there should be, so far as practicable, uniformity of punishment in accordance with the degree of guilt or extent of wrongful conduct on the part of the respective prisoners. This is a task difficult of accomplishment, but your attitude at all times has been that of willingness to extend relief whenever it is shown that injustice has in any respect been done. *(Sen. Doc. above, p. 9.)*

And later on, in applying this salutary principle specifically to the case before him, the Attorney General admits what is equally and obviously true in the Browder case:

> Undoubtedly also, in Debs' case, a far heavier sentence was pronounced than would have been imposed or justified upon another citizen. . . . *(p. 12.)*

Then, reminding President Harding of the basic purpose of punishment under our criminal jurisprudence, the Attorney General's following words would seem to suggest that the effect of an adverse political climate upon the prosecution and sentence is a factor entitled to its due weight in the total process of determining executive clemency:

> There is always one consideration which must be taken into account in dealing with pardon cases and that is the object sought to be accomplished by the imprisonment, which is the protection of society. . . . There is no other justification for imprisonment. Vengeance does not, or at least should not, enter into a case. *(p. 11.)*

Like the Larkin pronouncement, the Debs memorandum concedes the justification, in sound public policy, of executive deference to a body of public opinion which, by petitions, resolutions, letters, and otherwise, had protested against Debs' continued imprisonment. This is a factor, of course, to which the strictly legal elements of the case are entirely irrelevant. The public sentiment to whose compelling force the Debs memorandum refers, is recognized as based upon considerations which transcend the strict letter of the law. The power of executive clemency was, in fact, conceived to afford it orderly expression and satisfaction in the constitutional system of a free society.

Indeed, the clear effect of the Department of Justice memorandum in the Debs case is to concede the lawful expression of mass opinion a full-fledged legal status in the operation of the clemency process. There can be no doubt that it played a decisive role in earning the freedom of Eugene V. Debs:

> An overwhelming mass of letters, petitions, and resolutions, the latter passed by various labor and other organizations throughout the country, have been received, requesting and urging the release of Debs as a matter of right and justice. . . . *(Sen. Doc. 113, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess. Jan. 16, 1922, Cal. day, Jan. 17, 1922, p. 3.)*
>
> It is wise, therefore, and I think expedient that the government should take note of the misapprehension . . . existing among a portion of our people . . . and that we should examine their contentions and by some act or pronouncement indicate the attitude of the government and its reasons therefor. *(p. 7.)*
>
> . . . his prolonged confinement will have an injurious effect on a large number of people who will undoubtedly regard his imprisonment unjustifiable either as judged by his acts—that is, as considered by his utterances—or by existing conditions. If this thought affected only a few it would be immaterial, but undoubtedly a large number of persons will entertain this same view, and since the primary object of punishment is the beneficial effect it will have upon society from the standpoint of example, continued confinement beyond a certain period may, under the conditions set forth, be far from beneficial in its tendency in other respects and operate also as an example of extreme and unjustifiable harshness. In a very real sense this is true in the present instance and is a condition which must be taken into account. *(p. 11.)*

THE VOICE of mass opinion urging the liberation of Earl Browder grows louder each day. Already scores of trade unions, cultural bodies, and hundreds of thousands of Americans have made their position clear on this case. No conceivable public purpose is served by continued incarceration. These considerations taken together with the "undue harshness" of the sentence would eminently justify the exercise of the executive power.

R. D. PRESCOTT.

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MR. INGERSOLL RETURNS FROM RUSSIA

The editor of PM writes his impressions of the USSR for his newspaper. What he saw and what he did not understand. Some serious limitations. By A. B. Magil.

RALPH INGERSOLL, editor and publisher of the newspaper *PM,* has been to Russia and come back with a bagful of impressions, anecdotes, comments, and assorted odds and ends. In a series of articles which ran for about three weeks, he dumped them all into the readers' laps and left it to Joe Smith and Minnie Jones to put together and add up. And Ingersoll's articles do add up. He irritates you and gets in your hair, he is a perpetual Roman candle fizzing and sputtering over the page, but for all that is trivial and silly in his pieces, for all that is even downright false—not by design perhaps, but because of the class prejudice that warps vision and understanding—Ralph Ingersoll has brought back more of the truth about the Soviet Union than has any American capitalist journalist in years. After the succession of Eugene Lyons', Jan Valtins, Krivitskys, and other professional poisoners of the public mind, what Ingersoll has done is a great deal. For today the truth about Russia, never an academic question, is literally one of life and death for America as a nation and for every individual American. It is one of Ingersoll's supreme virtues that he understands this, that he recognizes that the USSR is America's ally, and wants that alliance to be strong and complete in every sense.

Of course, Ingersoll hasn't told anything like the full truth about the Soviet Union. For one thing he did not see enough, know enough, or spend enough time there. In fact, after only three weeks in Moscow and three more on trains entering and leaving the country, it would have been better and truer had he not attempted to cover so much ground, journalistically speaking; had he, for example, spared his readers definitive judgments (mostly fatuous) on Soviet art, the theater, the cinema, and almost anything that happened to pop into his head. But a more important factor in limiting the amount and kind of truth that Ingersoll brought back was that everywhere he went he carried with him the intellectual and psychological baggage of a person whose fundamental ties are with the capitalist world. He tells us that he did his best to free himself from prejudice. There is evidence that he really tried, but there is even more evidence that, despite occasional flashes of understanding of the deeper meaning of socialist life, he did not succeed. And so, what Ingersoll has done—whether consciously or unconsciously doesn't matter—is to tell enough of the truth to persuade the American people that all-out aid to the Soviet Union is a good investment in terms of their own security, but not enough to cause them to draw too favorable conclusions about the social principles on which Soviet life is based and about the American advocates of those social principles. On the contrary, the editor of *PM* goes out of his way to drive a wedge between the Soviet Union and Communism.

INGERSOLL'S ARTICLES contain three types of material: what he has seen, what others have told him, and what he thinks about it all. He is at his best when he tells what he himself has seen and experienced. He writes warmly of the Soviet people, of wounded soldiers and friendly officers. He has enormous curiosity and pokes his nose into all kinds of places, including a secret anti-aircraft battery and a Roman Catholic church. He makes his interview with Stalin exciting and dramatic, radiant with the greatness of the man even though he cannot reveal anything Stalin said. And he tells us much that is heartening: that the quality of the Red Army's equipment is superb; that "there will be a Red Army intact and under present management in the field a year from now"; that "I found Soviet trains running faster and more efficiently when I came out ninety miles behind the front line than I had when I came in six weeks earlier from the East"; that "in six weeks' study on the spot I found no evidence of disruptive political force"; that "Racial tolerance is a prime issue of this war. Racial tolerance is a prime virtue of the Soviet Union"; and much more.

Of course, it is true that for many of us all this is obvious. But most Americans don't know these things, have been kept from knowing them by the falsifications of the press, the radio, and the anti-Soviet journalistic racketeers. And it is well that Ingersoll's articles, despite their serious shortcomings, have reached not only the readers of *PM,* but hundreds of thousands in other cities in the United States and Canada where they have been syndicated.

It is when Ingersoll attempts to give his readers a detailed picture of what life under the Soviets is like—laudable as that attempt is—that he begins to fumble. Take, for example, his effort to make it appear that the Soviet people live in overwhelming poverty. The conclusion that he wants American readers to draw is obvious. He describes the appearance of the villages and towns that his train passed through in Asiatic Russia. But what he doesn't say is that this was one of the most backward regions in the world before the Revolution and that it has gone so far in twenty-odd years that what is poverty by New York standards would be envied by the people of China, India, Japan, Spain, Italy, yes, and by the people of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and large sections of our own South.

Ingersoll keeps harping on this poverty note, telling his readers that the derelicts on Bowery breadlines are better dressed than the average Moscow worker (which Bowery are you talking about, Ralph?), and that "a dishwasher in an American hash house would not trade his life for that of an average Soviet workman" (what about vice versa?). And there are such plain misstatements of fact as that "it has been only for a year or two that *all* the citizens of Moscow have had shoes and shirts." I was in Moscow in 1930, when conditions were not nearly as good as in more recent years, and while I made no exhaustive investigation, I saw no one without shoes or shirts.

The curious part about all this emphasis on poverty and on shoddy clothes and lack of gadgets is that Ingersoll knows the answers and even gives them, though not in a way that would change his emphasis. "For if their [the Soviet people's] poverty is no secret," he writes on November 10, "neither is the reason for it. It is self-imposed. For over twenty years the Russians have consciously skimped and starved themselves to buy two fantastically expensive capital assets: The first is an industrial plant. It now stands, half finished. The second is their army." And Ingersoll really rebukes himself when he says: ". . . it's hardly fair to compare their country with ours, 150 years after we began carving this country out of a new continent." He might have added that millions of Europeans today would gladly trade their better-made clothes (if any) and their gadgets for those two capital assets of the Soviet people.

THE FIRST BIG FACT about economic conditions in the Soviet Union is that living standards are limited by those two considerations and by them alone, considerations that now make possible the magnificent Soviet resistance; in capitalist countries the living standards of the masses are limited primarily by the fact that a handful of wealthy individuals have grabbed the lion's share of the country's wealth to the detriment of everybody else. The second big fact is that in the USSR no one can get rich at the other's expense, no wide discrepancies in income exist, and everybody has an opportunity to acquire the skill that commands the highest material as well as spiritual rewards. The third fact is that in addition to the money wage, the Soviet worker gets free all kinds of social services, such as an old age pension, sickness and maternity compensation, etc. The fourth fact is that until the Nazi attack, living standards were constantly ascending and the first limiting consideration, the lack of an industrial plant, was in process of being completely overcome. Ingersoll repeatedly gives the figure of 200 rubles a month as the typical wage of a Soviet worker. It is not. According to the report of Voznesensky, chairman of the State Planning Commission, to the Communist Party conference last February, the average monthly wage in 1940 for all Soviet workers, skilled and unskilled, industrial and white-collar, was well over 400

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rubles a month, and in 1941 it was scheduled to rise to more than 500 rubles.

In this connection Ingersoll's attempt to invent castes and classes in the Soviet Union shows a confused approach and little knowledge of the facts. It is not true that "Whole classes are disenfranchised while other groups get special privileges." Article 135 of the new Constitution gives the right to vote to "all persons who have reached the age of eighteen, irrespective of race or nationality, religion, educational and residential qualifications, social origin, property status, or past activities," the sole exceptions being "insane persons and persons who have been convicted by a court of law and whose sentences include deprivation of electoral rights." In his speech in 1936 on the new Constitution Stalin specifically urged the rejection of an amendment to bar the vote or the right to hold office to "ministers of religion, former White Guards, and all persons of pre-revolutionary times who are not engaged in socially useful labor." It is equally untrue that in order to be eligible for membership in the Communist Party a person "must have a pure blood line and be born of workers, descended from workers." If this were so, Lenin, Molotov, and other Soviet leaders could never have become members of the Party. When I visited the Soviet Union, I met a writer who was descended from the nobility, born a prince. He was a member of the Communist Party and one of the most popular Soviet poets.

There are other things that Ingersoll gets out of kilter, but perhaps nothing is quite so silly as his attempt to give his readers the lowdown on what the Russians really think of the American Communist Party. He quotes no one specifically, but presents his own impression that "They [the Russians] thought American Communists stupid and spoke scornfully of them." He follows this with the following alleged composite quotation: "Any fool could have seen that we were simply playing for time, that while we were at it we had to be polite to the Germans. The last thing we wanted was to help Germany defeat Great Britain, and we gave the Germans as little as we could." Something is wrong here—in fact, it looks like a case of mistaken identity. Was it the American Communists who said that the Soviet Union wanted to help Germany defeat Britain? Or is it Ralph Ingersoll, who only a few days before this article appeared wrote: "I had been very angry about the Soviet government's working alliance with the Nazis" (*PM*, Nov. 2, 1941)? Ingersoll seems to have played a trick on those anonymous Russians; he has attributed to the American Communists his own and his friends' nonsensical ideas about Soviet-German relations and appropriated for himself the Communists' realistic attitude which has been confirmed by events. Yes, indeed, any fool could have seen. . . .

But beyond these absurdities and despite them, Ralph Ingersoll has caught a glimpse of the future, and his report leaves no doubt that it works. "Under the imperial regime of the czars," he writes, in *PM* of November 10, "they [the Russian people] were dependent for their food upon the impact of nature on a backward agricultural system. It often starved them to death by the millions. They were ignorant and slothful. They had indeed 'nothing to lose but their chains.' The czar put on a fine show in his court, but there was not a factory in Russia that could produce a ball bearing, let alone a tractor or a tank. Hitler could have had the Ukraine for a single panzer division if he had only the czar's army to oppose him today.

"This is the great paradox of Russia: poor as its people are today, theirs really is a success story. The only legitimate room for argument is in whether their success would not have been greater under liberal capitalist management. It seems to me rather an academic argument. There's no doubt that, before the war, the present generation in Russia was more satisfied with its lot, more confident of its future than most generations in Europe and any in Asia."

Certain it is that the argument about socialism versus liberal capitalism is one that can well be left for the future to decide. Only if Hitlerism is destroyed will the peoples of all countries be able freely to determine their individual destinies. Meanwhile there's a war to be won, a war for America's very life, as well as Russia's and Britain's and China's. And in the winning of that war not only liberal capitalists, but conservatives have a stake no less than workers, Republicans and Democrats no less than Communists. By telling as much of the truth as he has, Ralph Ingersoll has helped make clear this common stake, this urgent obligation of us all.

A. B. MAGIL.

Stevenson

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CAMPAIGN FOR THE CAUCASUS

Colonel T. considers the tactics developing in the contest for the Soviet oil fields. Possible maximum and minimum objectives. How the Red Fleet figures in the picture.

WHATEVER happens south of the Rostov line is, directly or indirectly, an attack on and for the oil of the Caucasus. This attack has maximum and minimum goals. The Nazis' maximum goal is actually to seize the oil fields of Maikop, Grozny, and Baku. The minimum goal is to seize the oil fields of Maikop, and perhaps Grozny, and to deprive the Soviet Union of the Baku oil by cutting the lines of communications between that city and the country north of the Caspian Sea.

To achieve the minimum objective the Nazi army may carry on limited operations to the area north of the great Caucasian Range. Complete command over the Black Sea would not be necessary for these operations. The maximum goal would entail either the forcing of the Caucasian mountain barrier or marching through Transcaucasia from the rear. For this, complete command of the Black Sea would be necessary. And this could be achieved only by depriving the Soviet Black Sea Fleet of all its bases, including Poti and Batum.

At this writing the German armies are exerting their maximum efforts in the Crimea. Here their goal is twofold: one (see map)—to force their way to the Strait of Yenikale (or Kerch) in order to prepare a crossing over to the Caucasian mainland, in the Kuban district; and two—to take Sebastopol and deprive the Soviet Black Sea Fleet of its best and only complete base. Operation 1 pertains to the minimum goal. Operation 2 pertains to the maximum goal. Of the two, the operation against Kerch may succeed before the one against Sebastopol.

Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that the Germans have succeeded in taking Kerch and have reached the entire shoreline of the Straits (from one and one-half to four miles wide). At this juncture they would have to undertake a naval operation under the guns of the Red Black Sea Fleet which will be, at least in part, concentrated here. Again let us assume that a pea-soup fog has permitted the Nazis to cross over to the Taman Peninsula (3) in fair numbers, using assorted bottoms gleaned along the coast of the Sea of Azov and, perhaps, hammered together in short order.

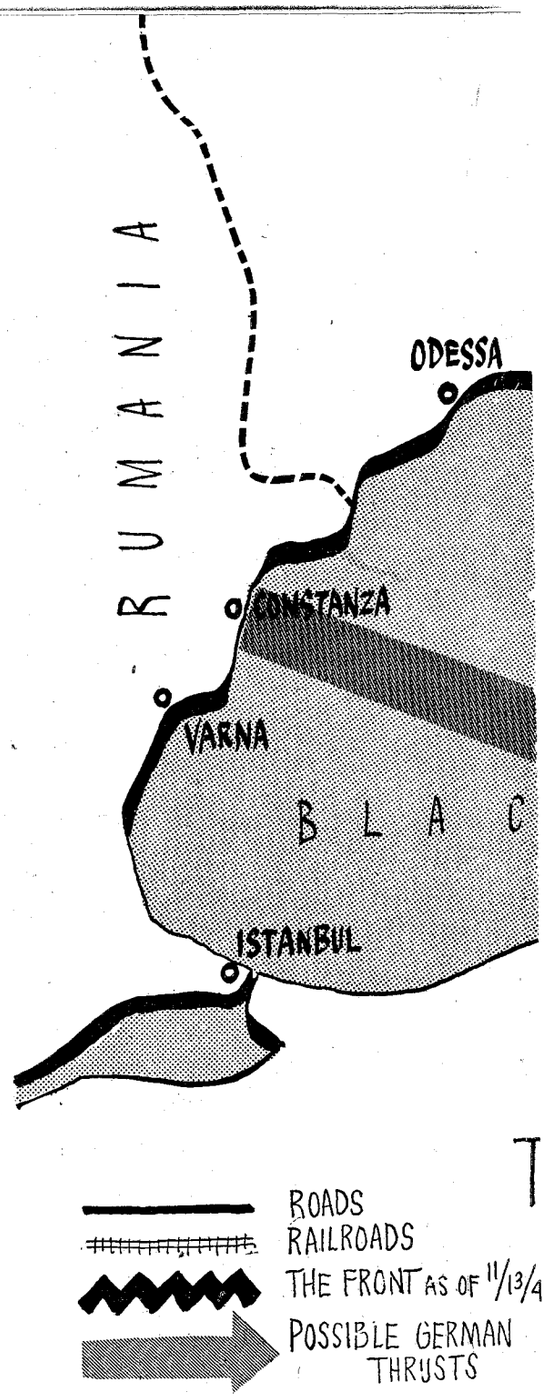
This limited force would first of all face the Soviet prepared positions on the Taman Peninsula. This is a narrow defile, or bottleneck, not much wider than Perekop. And while Perekop was stormed by the entire power of von Runstedt's southern wing, a necessarily restricted number of German troops would have to storm Taman. These troops would have in their rear not the broad expanses of the Ukraine, but the narrow communications from Perekop to Kerch plus a body of water between them and their bases—a body of water which would be made far from safe by the Black Sea Fleet.

In case of success against the Taman position, the German High Command would have to face the problems of Operation B as outlined on the map. This operation would entail: (a) outflanking the Don position by a stab toward Stalingrad and thus helping Operation A which has been stymied before the defenses of Rostov for weeks; (b) pushing toward Astrakhan in order to cut both the line of the Volga and the railroad Baku-Kizliar-Astrakhan-Kuybyshev (with a detour); and (c) a march along the northern fringe of the Caucasian Range to take the Maikop and Grozny oil fields and to sever the Baku-Astrakhan railroad at Kizliar.

This enormous and complex operation, necessitating many army corps, would attain the minimum German oil goal only partially, because the oil from Baku would still be able to move north by way of Guriev and, failing this because of middle-winter ice, by way of Krasnovodsk, due east from Baku across the Caspian. True, both routes would be tenuous and long, but they would be possible. Operation B, just outlined, would probably encounter in the huge area Rostov-Stalingrad-Astrakhan-Kizliar-Krasnodar not only a good number of regular Red Army divisions, but would also come up against the great reserves trained by Marshal Budenny who doubtless is whipping them into shape precisely in this area.

The march on Stalingrad, and especially that on Astrakhan would take place through almost roadless wastes of steppe where terrific frosts and winds rage during the winter months. All dwellings would be burned and destroyed. The new line of supplies for the Germans would be more than double in length of the one they have to maintain between the border and Kerch, for instance. The last railhead would be some 200 miles short of the lower Volga. The Germans would have only one railroad line along direction "a," and a single track line at that, passing through the Don Cossack country. And Don Cossacks make tough guerrillas.

The march along the Caucasian Range to Grozny and Kizliar would be a 550-mile flank-march along a mountain fastness teeming with regulars and guerrillas. The German right flank would always be exposed, unless they sent armed expeditions into each little valley and gully on that way. And von Runstedt would hardly have enough companies and even platoons to do that.



In other words it would seem that the only attainable thing for the Germans if and when they cross the Straits of Yenikale would be to try and occupy what would be left of the Maikop oil fields. Also to send a force to help crack the Rostov position, and to occupy Novorossisk. But the Black Sea Fleet would have Sebastopol, Poti, and Batum left. Of course, should the Rostov defense give way by that time, the situation would be different, but in that case the Crimean operation would not change things much. And so we see that Operation B would not achieve the maximum goal: Baku would still be on the other side of those terrible mountains with peaks rising to 18,500 feet. In order really to achieve something worth while the Germans would have to get over them. But how?

The Caucasian Range reaches from the

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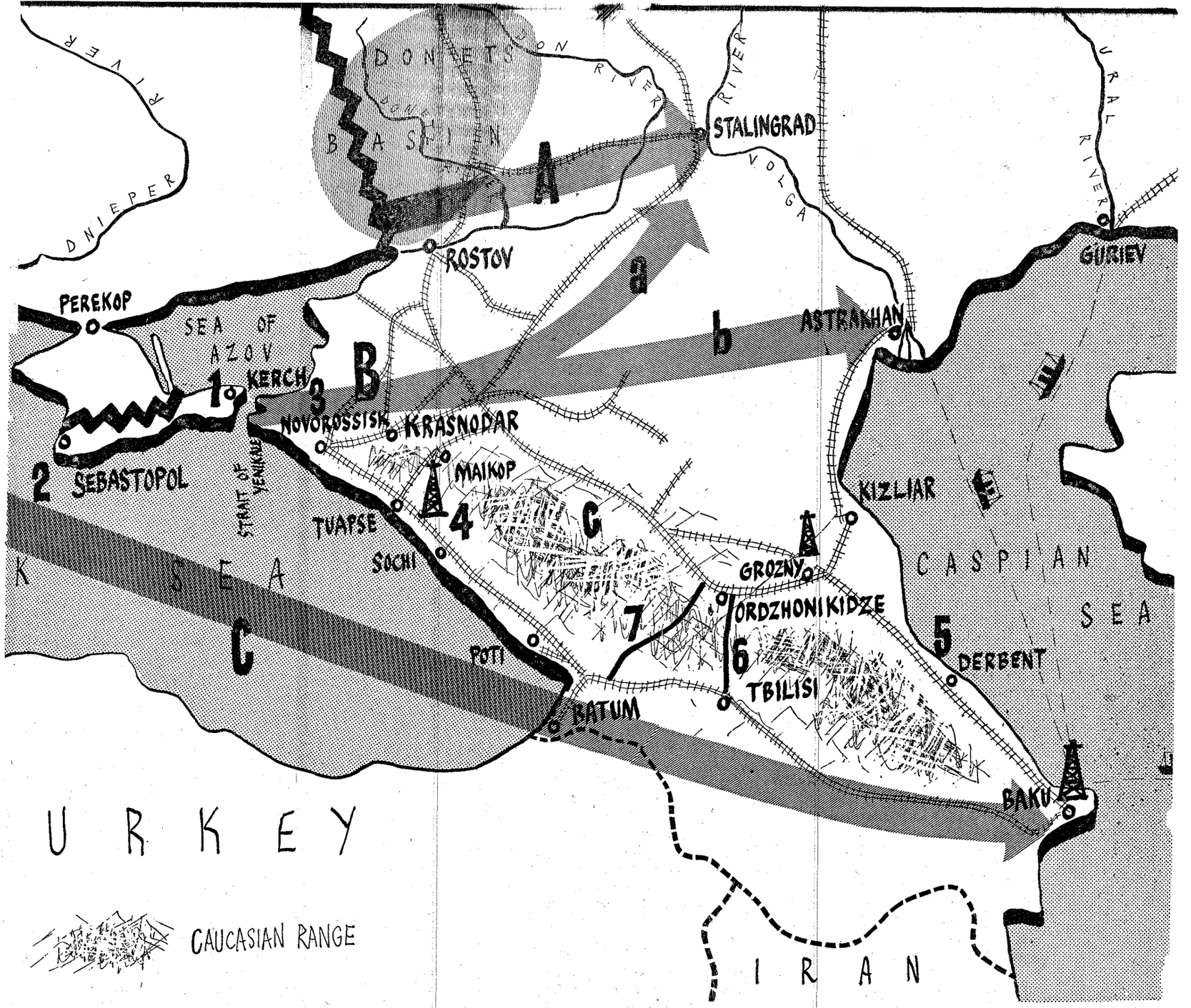

Black Sea to the Caspian. There are really four practicable "gates" from Europe into Asia here. We have marked them on the map 4, 5, 6, and 7. All four of them are easily defendable with a total of three army corps. Gate 4 is a narrow strip of land between the mountains and the Black Sea, cut by precipices with bridges over them. The railroad runs through countless tunnels. This is a defile about 100 miles long, and only a few hundred yards wide in spots. One army corps could hold here.

Gate 5 is the so-called Iron Gate of Derbent (named so because here an enormous iron gate used to shut out Asia from Europe). Here the remnants of the famous Caspian Wall are still in existance. This is also called Alexander's wall, 50 yards long and blocking the narrow Iron Gate. The pass is easily defendable, let us say—with another army corps. Gate 6 is the famed Georgian Military Road, running through the Daryal Gorge which can be defended by a machine-gun company against all comers. It crosses the Pass of the Cross (Krestovyi Pereval) which in the winter is very dangerous because of avalanches. Give it one division. Gate 7 is the Ossetian Military Road, still more rugged and less developed than its Georgian namesake. Another division to defend it. Thus we see that the crossing of the Caucasus, during the winter especially, would be hardly practicable.

AS I HAVE ALREADY INDICATED, in order to get to Baku (maximum objective), the Nazis would have to take the Caucasus in the rear. But in order to do this the Germans would have to take Sebastopol, Novorossisk, Poti, and Batum (they could march through Turkey, of course, but that is another story) in order to deprive the Black Sea Fleet of its bases. The capture of Sebastopol would not solve the problem in its entirety. We saw that Novorossisk might be captured if position 3 were pierced. But what about Poti and Batum? Ruling out a Turkish campaign (which would be a tremendous undertaking unless the Turks helped instead of resisting) these ports might be captured only by a movement through Gate 4. The difficulties attending such a movement have already been described.

Whatever the outcome of the struggle for Sebastopol and Kerch, the Germans will hardly be able to win a decision in the Caucasus before Voroshilov's and Budenny's reserve armies are ready to man British and American tanks, and before these tanks are ready to be manned.

COLONEL T.

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TOGETHER V

Some of the statements famous Soviet intellectuals have sent thei

Sergei Eisenstein

Movie director, producer of "Armored Cruiser," "Potemkin," and "Alexander Nevsky;" Stalin Prize winner

THE popularity which American films enjoy in the Soviet Union and the respect shown for Soviet films in America speak for the close ties uniting the two peoples and reveal the appreciation which the art of one receives among the other. The spirit of liberty and patriotism characteristic of the finest American and Russian motion pictures meets with a ready response among the people of both countries.

American motion pictures had reached a high degree of development long before the Soviet cinema came into being. We began our work at a time when America could already boast of such outstanding producers and actors as Griffith and Chaplin. Their productions aroused the admiration of our motion picture public and won the profound respect of our young producers. Griffith's films served us as models in the staging of our first monumental pictures; and we laughed and wept over the adventures of the little man in the bowler hat.

Subsequently, when our own cinema was firmly established and when life called for new forms in motion picture production, when we created our own style and made our own contribution to the development of the world's cinematographic art, our films made their appearance in America, that classical country of the motion picture.

Our very first efforts were received with understanding and respect. This was true of *Armored Cruiser, Potemkin, Mother, Earth,* and of other of our silent films. It was true of our sound films, such as *Chapayev,* the series on Lenin, and *Peter I.* It was also true of our anti-fascist films, *Alexander Nevsky, Shors, Professor Mamlock,* and *Rubber Truncheon.*

For our part, we hailed such American films as *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* and *The Great Dictator,* the latter of which, it is true, we as yet know only from press reports. The unique productions of Walt Disney invariably evoke the admiration of our moving picture public. John Ford and Frank Capra, together with Chaplin and Disney, whom I take this opportunity of greeting, are extremely popular with everyone connected with Soviet motion picture art.

Clark Gable, Gary Cooper, and particularly Henry Fonda, whose vivid portrait of Abraham Lincoln will long be remembered, Wallace Beery, Bette Davis, Myrna Loy, Katharine Hepburn, Alice Faye, Judy Garland, Mickey Rooney, and James Cagney never fail to rouse admiration in our country.

All this is further proof of the intrinsic kinship of the two nations. Little wonder, therefore, that in these grim days when mankind's finest representatives are combating the enemy of all that is great, noble, and humane, the American people and the Russian people should range themselves on the same side and take their stand on a relentless struggle against fascism.

E. V. Tarle

Author of numerous historical works ("Napoleon," "Talleyrand," "Napoleon's Invasion of Russia"), member of the Academy of Sciences

The declarations of prominent Americans concerning their solidarity with the Soviet Union have evoked a feeling of gratitude among the Soviet people. The Hitlerite buffoons would have the world believe that they are defending culture against the Bolsheviks. But no one is fooled by their hypocritical clamor.

Hard were the trials which the Russian people had to bear in the patriotic war against Napoleon. But his Russian campaign cost him his armies and his throne. So much the worse will be the fate of Napoleon's miserable present-day caricature. None of us doubts that Hitler's fascist army will be smashed in this war against a nation 200,000,000 strong, which has risen as one man in defense of its independence. Hitler's ill-fame, the shameful fame of a sadist and a hangman, will remain in the memories of the peoples who have experienced the horrors of existence under his yoke long after he himself has met his end.

N. N. Burdenko

Director of the Neurosurgical Institute, Stalin Prize Winner, member of the Academy of Sciences and of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR

During the last eight years I have four times had the pleasure of receiving visitors from America. I refer to the members of the Medical Association, headed by Dr. Penn, who visited Moscow

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THE editors and contributors of NEW MA
American writers in response to the rec
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workers, scientists, and other cultural crafts
that may express what we so deeply feel.

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Sergei Eisenstein *E. V. Tarle* *Mikhail Sholokhov* *V. I. Kachalov* *Le*

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E CAN DO IT

)lleagues in America. In defense of culture against the barbarians.

on Cause

are proud to join with hundreds of other volume by leading Soviet intellectuals, *In* . To the musicians, writers, painters, theater of the USSR we wish to say a few words

ar against the Hitlerite enemies of mankind le as well; it is the war of civilized men and land of Pushkin, Belinsky, and Gorky, is Twain, and Dreiser. We would be ashamed y with the same magnificent and heroic de- l. You have set us a glowing example. We our command.

compromise in this struggle is unthinkable. genius you have admired so highly, once id half free. And today it may be said with slave of Hitlerism and half free of its sav- choice with which history has confronted d hesitate to decide.

itler has succeeded in drawing us closer to- ur people been so deeply conscious of their day of the battle drives home the truth that on our shoulders, as it has on yours, to ce, our freedom, our cultural values. Your elves.

e have not abandoned our interest in the the more conscious of our humanistic tra- id cultivate it. The words of our great cul- merson, of Paine and Whittier—have taken of struggle in behalf of freedom which proud of that tradition. We shall be faith-

during the periodic educational tours through Western Europe arranged by the association. These visits in 1932, 1934, and 1938 helped to establish a spirit of genuine friendship between us. In the course of them the American doctors discovered that our Neurosurgical Institute had mastered the brilliant technique of Cushing, Dandy, and the other great American neurosurgeons.

The visit of Dr. Eloesser, one of the foremost specialists in pulmonary surgery, in the course of which he performed a number of brilliant operations in my clinic, is also fresh in the minds of the Soviet surgical world. The names of the Mayo brothers have in our country become symbolical of surgical progress; and I shall not forget the honor accorded me in the invitation to visit America to lecture on the treatment of paralysis following encephalitis.

Our system and aims call for methods of work all their own, for a rapid pace of development; and there is much that we have been learning from the Americans.

The arms of the Soviet Union bear the emblems of peaceful creative labor. All our achievements have been employed for the well-being of the peoples of our country, exercising their new right to free work, to happiness and prosperity. It is easy to understand what a spirit must move the people of such a land fighting against encroachment upon their country and their liberty. We are confident that you will understand and appreciate our fight for freedom and peaceful work, our wrath against the enemy, our fervent devotion to our country and readiness to give our lives for its independence. We are confident that we shall have the moral support of millions of honest and intelligent people in all countries.

Serge Prokofieff

Famous Soviet Composer

I have visited America eight times. At first many things about American life seemed strange to me, but gradually I discovered many traits in common between my country and America, a land of wide open spaces and sweeping ranges. In music, too, we have a great deal in common. Both in America and in our country music is steadily developing; the number of symphony orchestras is increasing at an extraordinary rate, and new composers are coming to the fore all the time.

We see an entirely different picture in present-day Germany. This country, which produced so many great composers in the past, has not added a single name worth mentioning during the past eight years. Does this mean that the German people have suddenly lost their creative powers? Of course not. It simply means that "the climate has become unfavorable" in Germany. Art cannot flourish in a country where science is clamped in a vise and employed only for venal and destructive ends.

My dear friends, American artists, this is not only our fight, but it is yours and that of the whole of progressive humanity. As President Roosevelt rightly said in his speech on July 4, if human liberty is suppressed in all other countries, it cannot survive in America either. And therefore we must all come to its defense—and that at once.

V. I. Kachalov

One of the leading actors of the Moscow Art Theater, People's Artist of the USSR

The first representative of the Soviet stage to make an appearance before the American public was the Moscow Art Theater, which visited America in 1922. I had the honor to be one of the troupe. Since that time our Soviet culture, and with it the Moscow Art Theater, has advanced with seven-league strides. Our theater has renewed Chekhov's poetic plays, his *Uncle Vanya* and *The Three Sisters;* we have staged the severe and courageous novels of Leo Tolstoy, with their terrible revelations of Russian life in the past, and have added more of Gorky's plays to our repertory.

And finally, present-day Soviet life has swept onto our boards with refreshing newness a number of highly interesting productions. We have begun to show the new Russia as portrayed in the plays of K. Trenyev, A. Korneichuk, and Vsevolod Ivanov. Our stage has always drawn its inspiration from the great men of Russian world literature. We have presented dramatized versions of the novels of Dostoyevsky as well as of Leo Tolstoy, and staged the plays of Chekhov and Ostrovsky; Shakespeare, Moliere and Goldoni.

Today we, the actors of the Moscow Art Theater, declare in the name of all that is sacred to the human race that the viper of Nazism must be crushed and a repetition of its wanton brutality be made impossible.

Stern *T. D. Lysenko* *Serge Prokofieff* *N. N. Burdenko* *O. J. Schmidt*

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I address myself to stage directors and actors, to connoisseurs and lovers of art. All out to fight the Nazi danger; all out to defend civilization!

Lena Stern

Director of the Institute of Physiology, member of the Academy of Sciences

I have often had occasion to meet eminent scientists at congresses held in the USSR and abroad and to tell them of the significant part science plays in our country. Many foreign intellectuals have visited our scientific institutions, and know what inexhaustible means are afforded our research workers and scientists. They have witnessed the zeal of our young scientists in conducting their work, and they have seen for themselves what honor the scientists and leading men of all countries and of all times enjoy in our country.

In common with the scientists of other countries, we Soviet scientists consider ourselves heirs and guardians of the cultural values created by mankind throughout history. The cultural progress of the various peoples of the Soviet Union has always been our special concern. We restore their material and spiritual treasures and monuments. We join in honoring their best thinkers, poets, and scientists, and assist them in raising their cultural level, at the same time preserving and developing their own national characteristics. The enthusiasm that unites our people, their invincible will to win, their profound conviction in the justice of our cause, are a pledge of our victory.

I am convinced that in this struggle for the salvation of our civilization, for the preservation of our learning, we have the sympathy of every honest human being, and that we can count on their support.

Mikhail Sholokhov

Author of "And Quiet Flows the Don," "The Silent Don," etc., Stalin Prize winner, member of the Academy of Sciences and of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR

My people have a saying that goes: "An empty ear of grain holds its head proudly." The empty head of German fascism must be lopped off. Blood-drunk German fascism must be crushed. We are fighting boldly and firmly for our country, and we shall keep up the fight to final victory. The

M. Slepnev

sympathy and moral support afforded us by the peoples of the great democracies are a very welcome sign. I call upon our friends in America and England to join forces in the fight against fascism. The threat of bondage hanging over the democratic states, the threat to the very existence of civilization must be averted. And the more united our efforts, the sooner will mankind breathe freely, rid forever of the horrors of rampant fascism.

O. J. Schmidt

Renowned Arctic explorer, Hero of the Soviet Union, Vice President of the Academy of Sciences, member of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR

The Soviet people stand firm and united behind our government, behind our Stalin. Side by side with the workers and peasants, our intellectuals, doctors, scientists, engineers are fighting to defend their native soil, to defend the loftiest ideals of humanity. The Red Army is dealing blow after crushing blow at the arrogant enemy. Our fliers—who in times of peace overcame the boundless wastes of the Arctic, landing men at the North Pole and taking their machines straight across the Pole to America—are now directing their planes with equal skill against the fascists, demonstrating before the whole world their superiority in battle.

We do not stand alone in this historic contest. We Soviet scientists and explorers are very happy to hear the many declarations of sympathy and support coming from America and England. I may say that I have some personal knowledge of the United States. In 1934, after the *Chelyuskin* had been crushed by the ice in the Arctic Ocean and the members of my expedition and the crew, stranded for two months on a drifting ice floe, had been rescued by our valiant fliers, I was taken by plane to Nome for medical treatment. The journey home from Nome involved for me a trip across the United States, which gave me the opportunity of meeting thousands of Americans from different states and different sections of the population, and thus gaining a better understanding of the American people and of their splendid qualities. I shall never forget the cordial warmth of my numerous meetings with Americans. I had the pleasure of a personal meeting with President Roosevelt, and was deeply impressed by the charm of this outstanding man. I also take great pride in being an honorary member of the Explorers' Club in New York.

And with this knowledge of the American people, of their spirit of liberty and their sober realism, I can feel no doubt as to where their sympathies lie. Every American will see that Hitler's insane attack on the Soviet Union tolls the knell of Hitlerism, that this is the moment when by our united efforts we must, can and will deal Hitlerism the final blow.

T. D. Lysenko

President of the Lenin Academy of Agronomy, Stalin Prize winner, member of the Academy of Sciences and of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR

Science and culture are greatly valued in our country. The USSR has built up a powerful industry. Agriculture has been highly mechanized and equipped with first class machinery. Labor has become highly productive, and the soil bountiful in its yields. The country has been covered with an extensive network of educational establishments, research institutions, academies, institutes, and laboratories.

And it is these gains of the industrious Soviet people that German fascism is out to destroy. In reply to this predatory attack, the country's entire economic resources, all science, have been put into the service of defense. Labor and science have merged into one mighty force that shatters all obstacles.

Those of us engaged in agronomical scientific research are doing everything in their power so that in this hour of trial our country will be provided to the maximum with food and raw material. The first task of all agricultural scientists is to secure high yields of all crops. Our inventions and research are directed towards the aim of assisting the collective and state farms to raise a bumper harvest. And in this we will be working hand in hand with the collective farm experimenters.

The Soviet people and their scientists are filled with the common desire to defend the liberty and independence of their country. The lofty aims which the Soviet people are defending, with arms in hand and on the labor front, are near and dear to every progressive thinking man in every country of the world. These aims are arousing, and cannot but arouse still more forcefully the sympathy and approval of all honest people.

M. Slepnev

Well known Soviet airman, Hero of the Soviet Union

Soviet airmen have always found a warm friendly welcome in America. Shestakov, the first Soviet flier to visit the United States, was hospitably received fifteen years ago, as were Chkalov and our other pilots who blazed the trail to America via the North Pole. We have shown the Americans the same hospitality. The wonderful skill of Howard Hughes, Wiley Post, and other American fliers has been duly appreciated in our country. As far as we could we helped them in their round-the-world flights.

In the winter of 1929-30, at the order of the Soviet government, I took part in the search for the courageous airmen who had been lost in the Arctic—Col. Ben Eilson of the American Service, and his mechanic, Lieut. Earl Bohrland. Together with the American fliers Mr. Dorband and Joe Crossen, and Capt. Pat Reed, the Canadian, we braved the elements in cold Chukotka and in no less rigorous Alaska. The courage of the American airmen, the cordial welcome I received in Fairbanks when I brought the bodies of the lost heroes there, created an indelible impression in my mind.

The friendship between the Soviet and American airmen grew even closer in 1934, during the joint rescue from the Arctic ice of the crew and scientific personnel of the wrecked *Chelyuskin*. Mr. Lebry and Mr. Armstedt, who worked as mechanics on the planes piloted by Levanevsky and myself, showed their skill and courage at that time. Our government awarded them the highest token of distinction in our country—the Order of Lenin.

We have been doing a lot of work. In the last few years I have carried out a number of scientific assignments. Now I am going to take the controls of a fighting plane, to do battle with the enemies of my country, the enemies of world culture.

The title of Hero of the Soviet Union was bestowed upon me for saving the lives of a few people. Now, like my comrades, I am going to fight for the benefit of all our people, for our families, for the safety of our cities and villages, for the culture created by the Soviet people. My strength, the strength of every fighter, is multiplied tenfold at this moment.

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UNITY—THE GOAL

An Editorial

MILLIONS in America are watching events on the labor scene with undisguised anxiety. The question of the captive coal mines has dominated the headlines for weeks; the deliberations of that great body of Americans—the CIO, 5,000,000 strong—assume hitherto unequalled proportions in the national psychology. What will happen in railroad is another matter of intense national concern. And more: all peoples engaged in their life-and-death combat with Hitler watch the last-minute bulletins from America. Not to speak of Hitler himself. That would-be conqueror of the globe is undoubtedly reading the cables from this country as diligently as he studies military activities at the fronts. Dissension in America would be worth armies to Berlin.

This much has been made clear: the overwhelming majority of our people has registered, in one manner or another, its belief that the defeat of Nazism is the major question before us, an issue that transcends everything else. Unionists in particular have been outspoken: "There can be no question," Philip Murray wrote President Roosevelt last week, "as to the wholehearted concern which the CIO unions have accorded the national defense program." The AFL, at its convention in Seattle, went on record for an all-out effort against Hitler. The majority of labor, like the nation as a whole, knows that the swaggering hordes of Hitlerism menace this country with a threat unequalled in our 150 years of independence. The people seek the maximum in achievement to end this menace: that can be gained only by maximum unity. Therefore, millions ask, why these strikes and rumors of strikes? Who is responsible?

The average American seeking the key to this question should first of all consider his own life. He knows how hard it is to make ends meet: the cost of living outdistances his income. Taxation has struck him more severely than ever before in his experience. But he reads the financial pages and knows, too, that the men who employ labor have reaped profits comparable to those in world war days.

The average American—and the working man is in that category—has expressed *his* willingness to share all necessary hardships to destroy the common enemy. But the unionist sees that a certain element in this country considers itself beyond the bounds of our common responsibility: there are men in high places who seek unbridled profit from the national emergency. There are industrialists who seek to do business as usual, and there is among them a category which plots to confuse and befuddle, which aims to throw the country into a turmoil that means as much to Hitler as battles won at the front. There are such employers—those corresponding to the groups in France that brought that proud nation to Vichy—who seek to scuttle the President's foreign policy by spreading dissension. They—and their spokesmen in Congress—showed their hand last week in their disgraceful opposition to revision of the Neutrality Act. In his article on page 3, Bruce Minton discusses in more detail the tactics which expose them as having less concern for a Hitler victory than they have for a strong labor movement in America. It is redress against them and the business-as-usual industrialists that labor seeks.

For these reasons we find the current situation in certain of the country's key industries. Many of the very men who passed resolutions to the effect that Hitler is the danger overshadowing everything else are aggrieved at the events in the past number of weeks. They have been willing—and still are—to submit their grievances to *proper* arbitration and mediation, but the findings of the National Defense Mediation Board in the case of the miners, and that of the President's fact-finding board in the railroads, have not inspired confidence. The workingmen, as a whole, abhor the possibility of stoppage in defense production. Key unions have sought in every possible way to step up production of tanks and airplanes. But to date they have not received the full measure of cooperation and encouragement from the government that the times require. The National Mediation Board actually falsified the stand of the miners and contended that the issue of a union shop for the nation was involved, not merely the question of a union shop for the remaining ten percent of the mine industry. The President's fact-finding board in the railroad situation proposed wage increases altogether too low: the railroad men found them unacceptable. The thirty percent increases the unions demanded are entirely justified. When one considers the long period they worked without wage increases and when one considers the actual low levels of railroad wages in comparison with the national standards, the awards of nine percent to the operating brotherhoods and seven and one-half percent to the non-operating unions are little more than an insult to the men. Consider, too, the fact that for the first nine months of 1941 the net income of the Class I railroads alone rose to more than $350,000,000 from about $58,000,000 for the same period the previous year.

Considering all these factors, what then, is to be done? That is the question millions are asking, particularly in labor. They grant that Hitler is the chief menace and that all other considerations are second to the fundamental one of defending their national independence. They know that an enslaved nation has little opportunity to talk even of improving its economic well being. They want production to increase—and they do not want stoppages, strikes. But they must defend their standards in order to increase production, in order to meet the arduous demands of today's war industries. What to do?

Here one must recognize the fact that the government bears the principal responsibility for continuing production and keeping the anti-Hitler effort in high gear. It must accomplish this by assuring fair treatment for those at the point of production. It behooves the government, therefore, to protect the workers' living standards by putting a ceiling on prices, by unequivocally squelching profiteering. Furthermore, if the government expects the workers to withhold their main weapon—the strike—it must create mediation boards that will genuinely protect the workers' interests. These are the *sine qua non* for harmonious labor relations that will achieve full competency in the problem of maximum production.

Labor, too, must draw the necessary conclusions from the scene. If, in the interests of keeping the wheels of production turning uninterruptedly, it avoids the strike, then it must resort to united political action to safeguard its standards. United political action, however, requires, first of all, the utmost working cooperation of all labor's contingents. Although it may not be possible at this time to win full consolidation of the AFL and CIO into one organization, a working relationship against Hitler can certainly be achieved. A solid front on all war issues is not only a possibility, but a historic necessity. That achieved, labor can best demand full participation in the policy-forming bodies of the nation—as, for example, representation in the Cabinet and all other top governmental agencies. Thus it can best convince the government of its needs, and cooperate most competently with the administration to assure the success of its foreign policy. With unity, it can best participate in all elections and advance to legislative councils those men who represent most ably the overwhelming anti-Hitler feeling of the country.

Labor has the strength: 11,000,000 united men and women in the CIO, AFL, and Railroad Brotherhoods represent a power such as the nation has never before witnessed. They should, as William Z. Foster suggested last week, assemble in a great national conference at this time of national emergency, and work out labor's general stand on the war.

Such a conference could be a boon by streamlining labor's program of a maximum effort to defeat Hitler and those who work for Hitlerism here. In full assembly labor would gather the benefit of the experiences of all its components in winning the battle of production. The delegates would make specific their attitude toward strikes, and how best to safeguard the standards of the workingman and his family. The conference would be a great step forward in achievement of a policy that would vastly strengthen national unity by strengthening the unity of that section of the populace that has most to contribute to victory.

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CARL BRISTEL

Next Steps

Now that the Neutrality Act has at last been abandoned, our ships are being armed, and our goods can now go directly to their destination, it is time to think a bit more deeply into the future of our foreign policy. In one sense, the revision of the Neutrality Act merely formalizes a state of affairs that has existed for some time. In deciding to help Britain through the lend-lease procedure, in expanding our aid to China, and determining that the defense of Russia was our own defense also, the American people long ago abandoned neutrality. What Congress has now done, belatedly, is to adjust the law to correspond with the actualities.

The question now arises of whether the entire procedure of a lend-lease participation in the war is enough. As the newspaper *PM* put it, in a stimulating editorial, Americans have to ask themselves whether they are "lenders or fighters." To really get the kind of war production we need, to settle the questions of morale, to encourage the British for closer, more effective action in alliance with the Russians, the United States has got to take a much bolder stand. For example, a declaration of war would enable us to leave the past altogether behind and place us on the highroad to a speedy defeat for Hitler.

And the evidence is, from the resolutions of countless organizations of the people, that the desire for clarifying our status is growing. Certainly the close votes in the House and Senate on revising neutrality laws did not reflect the feeling of the people at all. If anything, it reflected a certain desperation on the part of the isolationists, who are represented in Congress altogether beyond their influence in the country. They seized upon the administration's relations with labor to confuse the essential issue, the issue of national policy in a world crisis.

Another aspect of the scene was the reliance of many congressmen on the fact that they happened to have been elected to office under the Republican emblem. This also had nothing to do with the issue, since Hitler does not discriminate between Republicans, Democrats, Communists, vegetarians, Baptists, or surrealists when he sinks our ships: the issue of national policy in this emergency is bigger than party considerations. It was in fact a real setback to national unity when so few Republicans voted for a measure so clearly in the national interest.

That is not to say that the administration was blameless: it should never have permitted the labor issue to arise. It should not have allowed men like Howard Smith of Virginia or Millard Tydings of Maryland to try their inexcusable blackmail on issues of foreign policy. But the major shortcoming of the administration was its slowness to take the issues of foreign policy to the people, to educate the masses on the realities that face us. This would have isolated every congressman, whether Republican or Democrat, who is willing to gamble with our foreign policy for the sake of grinding axes on other questions.

Such boldness in educating the people on the realities of the war is now more than ever necessary. Having gotten rid of some outworn legislation, we have only begun to face the crisis as it must be faced. We have little time left to consider such measures as breaking diplomatic relations with the Axis powers, or a declaration of war. Tragically, Hitler will contribute a great deal of education for Americans by his submarine policy. But the biggest part of the job must get under way among the people themselves, led by an administration that certainly knows the score and must be frank enough to say it out loud.

At the Front

In the past ten days encouraging reports have come from the Eastern Front: local counter-attacks have been pushing the Nazis back at Volokolamsk to the east of Moscow, and Serpukhov to the south. At Leningrad Soviet units seem to have broken through several points of the German siege; British tanks were reported in action against renewed Finnish pressure in the Kola Peninsula while a squadron of American planes, assembled in record time by crack Soviet technicians, is reported to be in action. Both of these last items are a testimonial to the Allied help which is now definitely coming through. Another significant item is the fact that Soviet planes are raiding eastern German cities like Koenigsberg and Breslau, evidence of weakening German air power and continued Soviet strength in the air. All these news items form an even more positive pattern when it is remembered that Hitler and his press attache Dietrich boasted that the Soviet Union was already "broken" in the beginning of October. If anything, it appears that the German units are the ones that are breaking—suffering from intense cold, inadequate hospitalization, and guerrilla attacks on their communications.

Yet the dangers must not be lost sight of. Elsewhere in this issue Colonel T. discusses the struggle for the Caucasus, where the Nazis constitute an immediate menace. And there is also evidence that despite their losses, the Germans are preparing continued offensives around Moscow, for the purpose in part of reaching Vologda to sever the railline that comes down from Archangel, a vital route for British and American supplies. This is the meaning of their attacks at Tikhvin, a town in the Vologda direction. The Donets region will also be heard from, no doubt. Heavy pressure on Marshal Semyon Timoshenko's forces would not be surprising.

At the same time a vital struggle continues for control of the Mediterranean, which is important both for a possible second front and the defenses of the British position in the Middle East. This is a struggle which was highlighted, first by the sinking of a couple of Italian destroyers and several Axis convoys about two weeks ago, and second, the sinking of the British *Ark Royal,* the third aircraft carrier to be lost in the war and a grievous blow for Britain's Mediterranean patrol. The struggle also continues in the air, with strong Royal Air Force raids against Sicily and southern Italy. It is also proceeding fiercely in the diplomatic field, both in Turkey, and, most important, at Vichy. The Nazis are again making a real bid for the full use of the French fleet in the Mediterranean and are trying to prepare the way for eventual occupation of North Africa by reliable Axis forces.

Churchill's Speeches

As Claude Cockburn points out in his illuminating dispatch from London on page 5, Mr. Churchill's recent speeches must be read in context of the developing British scene. There is a real devotion to the Anglo-Soviet alliance among the British people, a devotion that is likely to be stimulated, rather than dissipated, by the difficulties that still stand in the way of intimate collaboration between Britain and the Soviet Union.

The Prime Minister said a number of things to the good: first, that the sinking of ships on the Atlantic has been reduced in recent months, thanks in part to the help of the American navy; second, that Britain has now gained equality with the German air force, if not superiority in the air over the Channel. In his address to the Lord Mayor's luncheon just a few days earlier, Churchill also made public the welcome news that British naval forces are entering the south Pacific to reinforce the United States in the event of war with Japan.

From all this, the average person would naturally draw the conclusion that if the ship situation has improved, if the British Navy is less pressed in the Atlantic and the RAF holds more than its own on the coasts of the Continent, this is the time to open that second front which Stalin and so large a majority of the British people have called for. It is possible that Churchill's negative attitude conceals plans which are under way; if not, however, his remark about taking the offensive sometime in 1943 is certainly disappointing. In Britain it may very well be considered alarming.

At any rate, this is not a strategy of quick victory, this "wait and see" attitude. The Nazis may be weakened considerably in the next year and the British forces with American help may be strengthened, and this is what Churchill may be waiting for. On the other hand, the Nazis may also gain a position to really open up on the empire in the Middle East. They may even rebound for a blow into north Africa, and even try an in-

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vasion on the island. It would seem more sensible in the long and short run to strike a blow now, to strike hard and thus bring a defeat for Hitler into view before the summer of 1943 arrives. This would be the obvious way to a certain victory; any other course makes victory infinitely more difficult.

It is not our business as Americans to tell the British cabinet how to win the war. The people of Britain themselves are making that very clear and will undoubtedly continue to do so. Our job is to throw America's full weight into the balance, to eliminate every excuse which certain circles in Britain are inventing on the grounds of America's delay in getting war supplies over. Our job is to encourage the British people with the realization that America too wants a second front and is ready to fight for it.

Helsinki Without a Mask

AS ALREADY announced by a German Foreign Office spokesman on November 4, the Finnish government has rejected Secretary Hull's warning that it cease military operations against the Soviet Union. Since the decision was made not at Helsinki, but in Berlin, the elapse of a week before the formal reply was necessary in order to maintain the hoax that Finland was acting on its own. In its reply the Finnish government reiterated its intention to extend military action beyond its old frontiers and to keep territory which it has seized in Soviet Karelia.

Secretary Hull's comment on the Finnish reply is dignified shadow-boxing, nothing more. To continue at this late date expressing the hope that the sinner will repent is unwittingly to help perpetuate the fiction that the Finnish government retains independence of action and has anything in common with democracy. The fact is, as NEW MASSES insisted two years ago and as the American people are now bitterly learning, that the men at the head of the Finnish government, whether they are avowed czarists and fascist sympathizers like Mannerheim or fake Socialists like Tanner, are arch-reactionaries who long ago sold out their country while ruthlessly suppressing their own people. Why, when the facts are so clear and so much is at stake, should we continue to help these Hitler stooges play a game which, as even the New York *Times* recently conceded, "makes a Nazi victory in Russia more probable than it would otherwise be, and by that much it increases the threat to our own future"?

The touchstone of American policy toward Finland should be our own future, our country's security against the Hitler menace. This requires, as A. B. Magil indicated in his article in last week's issue, complete severance of diplomatic and commercial relations with Finland and the treatment of that government as an ally of Hitler no different from Italy, Rumania, and Hungary. We also urge that special efforts be made to reach the Finnish people who are as much the victims of Hitler and his Helsinki Quislings as are the peoples of conquered Europe. We are happy to note that the *Nation,* which was at one time badly taken in by the Ryti-Mannerheim-Tanner gang, now, in an article by I. F. Stone, likewise urges strong action by our government.

New York Makes History

THE historic meaning of Peter V. Cacchione's election to New York's City Council goes beyond the fact that, for the first time, the legislative body of America's largest city will have a Communist member. Cacchione campaigned on a straight-out "Smash Hitler" slogan. He was elected by the voters of Brooklyn, where the Christian Front and its Tammany friends are supposed to be strong. And his 48,629 total came not only from Communist supporters: thousands of Democrats, Republicans, and Laborites gave him their first and second choice votes. The Kelly machine, which two years ago kept Cacchione off the ballot through a technical trick, could not stop him in 1941. Brooklyn knew "Pete," knew the man and his political program. He had come within 250 votes of being elected in 1937. In this campaign, as in previous ones, he and his party workers went directly to the people, talking with them, explaining. Voters were acquainted with his anti-fascist record, they remembered the battles he had led, as Brooklyn chairman of the Communist Party, for clean government and progressive social measures. A veteran of the first world war, of bonus marches, flophouses, and unemployment demonstrations, this son of an Italian immigrant knows America through its people and their problems. He is a splendid representative of that people.

There was another historic "first time" in the Council elections—the victory of a Negro candidate, Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church. Running on the ALP ticket, Dr. Powell was elected by the voters of Manhattan. As Cacchione promised that one of his first measures as councilman would be a resolution supporting Roosevelt's foreign policies and fullest aid to the nations fighting fascism, so Dr. Powell has pledged to fight for laws against the racial discrimination which impoverishes and degrades his people. The presence of these two men on the Council is a symbol of the electoral mandate against Hitler and Hitlerism.

Butler Honors a Fascist

DR. JOSE IGNACIO RIVERO, Cuban journalist, has been thrice decorated—by Hitler, by the king of fascist Italy, and now by Columbia University. The last medal was given him for spreading "sympathetic understanding among the peoples of South, Central, and North America" and therefore would seem to have no connection with his previous decorations. It does have, however. "Sympathetic understanding," as spread by Senor Rivero, means adulation of Hitler and Franco. As editor of the fascist *Diario de la Marina,* and Cuban leader of Franco's Falange, Rivero still follows the same line as in his Berlin broadcast of 1936 when he called upon God to preserve Hitler. He is, in short, an outstanding Nazi agent who lives up to the honors which der fuehrer and Victor Emmanuel bestowed upon him two years ago.

Undoubtedly Columbia's president, Nicholas Murray Butler, knew these facts about Rivero even before the New York *PM* published them and before the United American Spanish Aid Committee wired him its protest of the award. Mr. Butler, who has honored fascists almost as often as he has expelled progressive Columbia professors, went right ahead with the ceremonies for Rivero although the Spanish Aid Committee picketed the hall where they were held. Senor Rivero was given not only a medal and scroll, but $1,000 for "traveling expenses" to facilitate his Nazi propaganda work. With the blessings of the head of one of America's largest universities, he returns to a country whose people have ousted Nazi consuls for the sort of activity which Rivero heads. Columbia University would honor itself by ousting Dr. Butler.

Benito's New Book

SO COMPLETELY alien to ordinary human feeling are fascism and its leaders that the very idea that Mussolini has written a book on his dead son Bruno, seems almost grotesque. And yet it is probably true that he suffered grief when Bruno was killed in an airplane accident on August 7 at the age of twenty-three. But the grief now becomes a gesture, an oration, and—a whistling in the dark. For the quotations from *I Speak with Bruno,* cited by Herbert L. Matthews in the New York *Times* of November 14, show a preoccupation with death more fundamental than the emotion occasioned by the killing of his son. "One finds ever more strongly in this new work," writes Matthews, "his feeling for the supernatural, since in the case of Bruno, as in that of Arnaldo [Mussolini's brother], he tells of presentiments of death."

In the last chapter of the book Il Duce writes that "only the sacrifice of the blood is great. All the rest is ephemeral matter. Only the blood is spirit, only the blood counts in the lives of individuals and of people, only blood gives to glory its imperial color." This flight from the rational, this blood-mysticism and apotheosis of violence is the counterpart of the fascist flight from humanity in actual life, the violent suppression of everything sane, decent, and living. And when Hitler's Italian gauleiter writes: "But first we must conquer, conclude the sacrifice with victory, placate with victory the spirits who demanded and prepared it," is he here referring obliquely to his Nazi masters? Certainly this victory note is hardly joyous. Does the man who helped bring ruin and torment to millions, who in his orgy of killing sacrificed his own son, sense the hollowness, the inevitable doom of the blood-soaked fascist dream?

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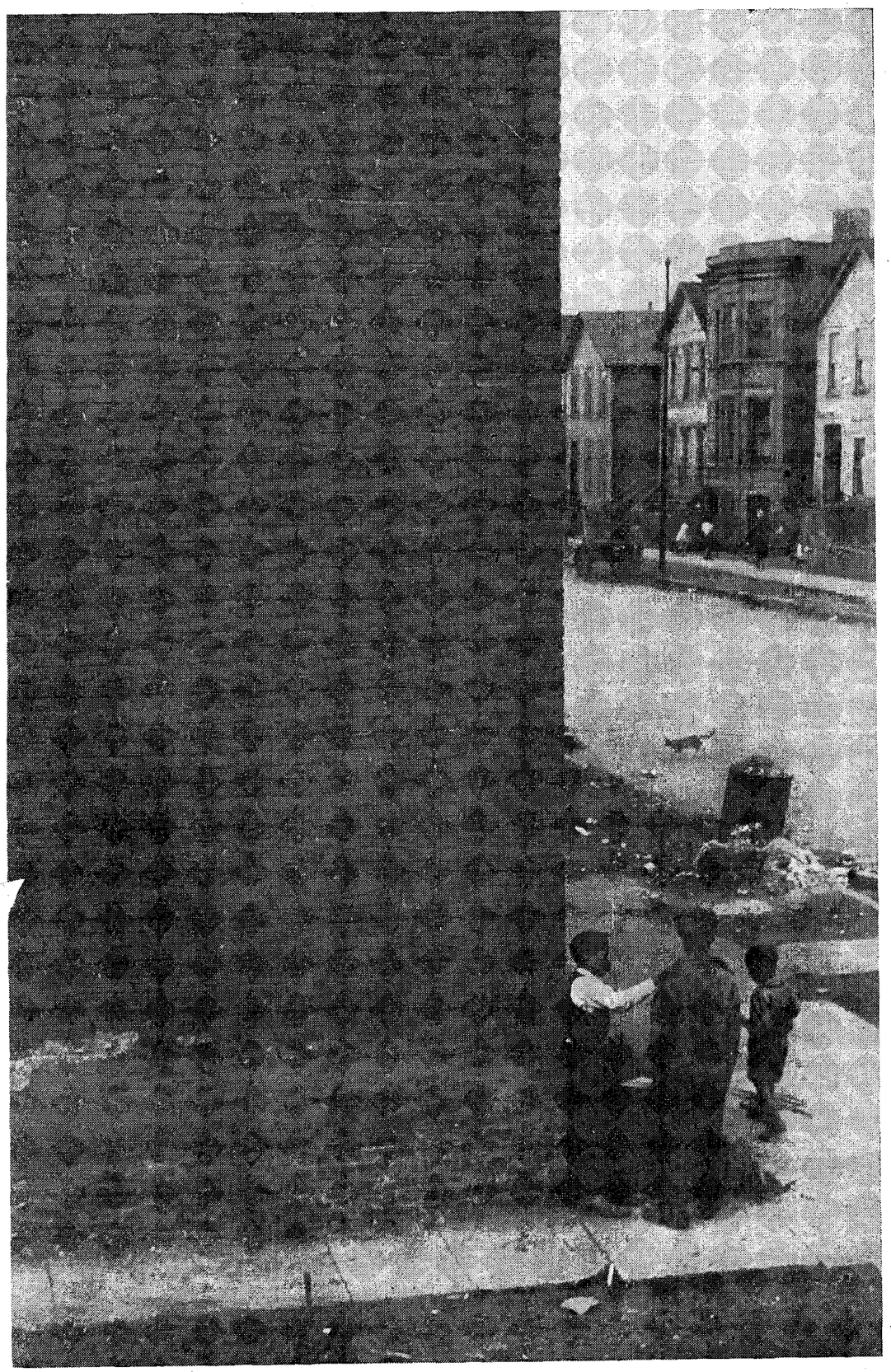
12 MILLION BLACK VOICES

Richard Wright's latest book, Samuel Sillen says, is the tearless narrative of the Negro people's life in America. A magnificent literary and pictorial study.



12 MILLION BLACK VOICES, *by Richard Wright. Photo-direction by Edwin Rosskam. Viking. $3.*

WHILE reading this magnificent book I kept thinking of a remark made by Richard Wright shortly after the publication of *Native Son.* I remember the occasion vividly. Wright had given a talk at Columbia University that evening on "How Bigger Was Born." In the discussion which followed, a member of the audience complained, in all good faith, that the author had gone too far in *Native Son.* The speaker felt that the experience had been too devastating, that Wright had failed to provide some kind of emotional release. It was in answer to this criticism that Wright made a comment which has great significance for any interpretation of his work. He pointed out that some readers of his earlier volume of stories, *Uncle Tom's Children,* had praised the book because it had made them weep. And Wright had made up his mind that in his future work he was not going to provide, so far as he could help it, "the consolation of tears." He was not interested in that kind of emotional release.

The remark may have seemed hardboiled and even cruel to some listeners. Actually it was nothing of the sort. What Wright was getting at, I believe, was his deep and passionate conviction that any approach to Negro life in terms of "the pathetic" falsifies reality. We have had enough tears. We have had enough of those who feel badly about Negro oppression and who comfort themselves with the thought that they are sufficiently sensitive to feel badly. Something deeper than sympathy is required. Nothing less than the transformation of human consciousness is needed. The *meaning* of Negro life as an organic part of American life must be burned into our minds. At the core of that meaning there is "an uneasily tied knot of pain and hope whose snarled strands converge from many points of time and space." And the writer, if he is to be in truth an engineer of human souls, must disentangle these historical threads and chart the future in which, by our common effort, they will be bound together again in a greater and more purposeful unity.

History, then, to begin with. Of course, Wright has not attempted a formal and detailed chronicle of the 300-year experience of the Negro people in America. He has depicted the basic patterns of that complex experience in its movement from the debased forms of feudalism toward the industrial and urban society of the twentieth century. The past 300 years, crowded as Wright says with suffering and abrupt transitions, have been equiva-

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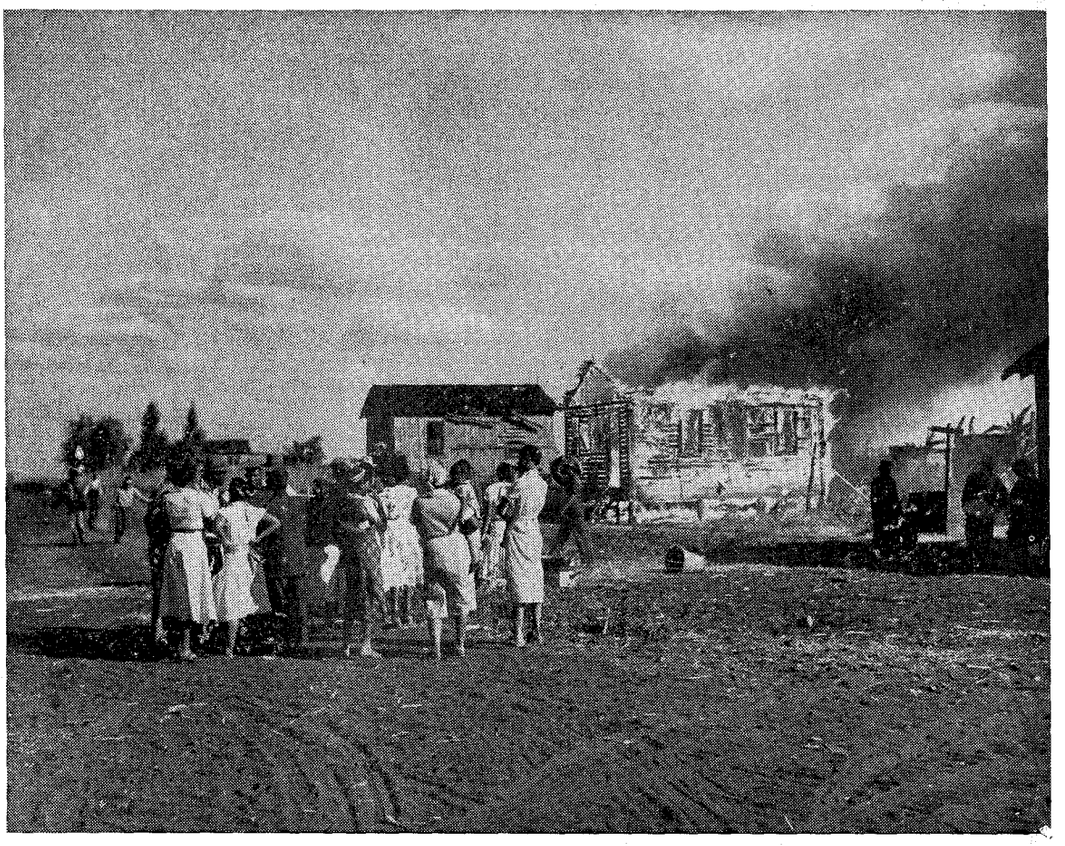
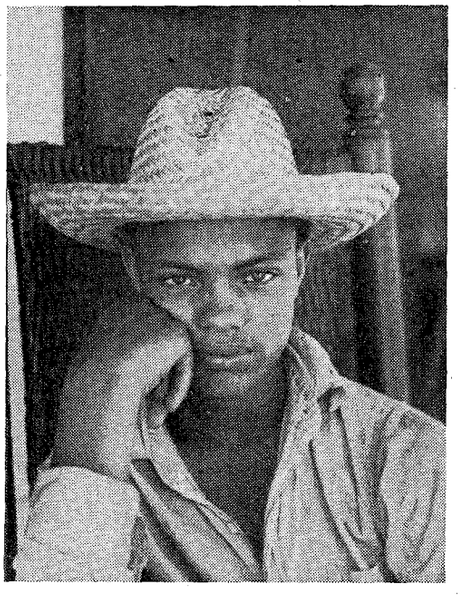
lent to 2,000 years in the history of whites. In a very short space, Wright has brilliantly done the nearly impossible through the magic of his prose. By the use of powerful symbols and richly suggestive overtones he has recreated a great historical drama. We see the African torn from his native soil, brutally wrenched from his family, uprooted from his own highly developed cultural milieu. The horrors of the slave ships are portrayed in a few paragraphs; but every word is aflame with imagery and understanding. And then the years of degradation under slavery, years of incredible torment and noble revolt; the new slavery of the sharecrop system; the terrifying problems of urbanization following the world war. The vast panorama unfolds. The scales fall off our eyes.

If the story has such a tremendous impact, it is not merely because a superbly gifted master of living speech has told it. "Each day," the text begins, "when you see us black folk upon the dusty land of the farms or upon the hard pavement of the city streets, you usually take us for granted and think you know us, but our history is far stranger than you suspect, and we are not what we seem." It is *we* who tell the story, and the story is of *ourselves*. The voice is that of 12,000,000 Negroes whose manifold individual experiences have a basic identity. And the choral form of expression is not a literary mannerism or device. It is the inevitable form for this material. The result is far from that chaotic and noisy cacophony which some writers have falsely assumed to be the only "realistic" expression of mass experience. On the contrary, the prose is harmonious, resonant, eloquent. A *nation* is speaking, with dignity and passion and pride.

There is no pretense here, no disposition to forget or hide the truth, however ugly or brutal. The life of the Negro people is interpreted in the only light that can make it intelligible; in the light, that is to say, of historical materialism. Wright makes it clear that at the bottom of the various shifts and wrenches in Negro experience there are shifts and wrenches in the productive relations of society. The Negro has been an object of exploitation by a ruling class, whether under feudalism or capitalism. The forms of his exploitation have changed; the fundamental fact remains. One need only look at the photos in this volume to see at a glance that life in a twentieth century city tenement can be as grim as life on the plantation; that the uniformed policeman in a factory town can be just as tough as any constable in the rural South. In every area of American contemporary life, in school and church, politics and industry, Jim Crow rules in whatever disguise.

But the economic and class factors underlying Negro history do not constitute the whole story. What Wright succeeds in doing is to show the influence of these factors on the ideas and emotions of people. He communicates the fears and desires, the agony and hope of real human beings. He suggests the profound differences between the folk culture of a pre-industrial environment and the new consciousness emerging in the new environment of the North. For the irony is that the new forms of exploitation enabled millions of Negroes to come in contact for the first time with the essential processes of modern life and they created the conditions for understanding between more and more Negroes and whites. Until the moment, now reached, when the Lords of the Land say, "We will not grant this!"—only to be answered, "We ask you to grant us nothing. We are winning our heritage, though our toll in suffering is great!" The moment when the Bosses of the Buildings say, as they always have said: "Your problem is beyond solution"—only to be answered, "Our problem is being solved. We are crossing the line you dared us to cross, though we pay in the coin of death."





This book is a shattering answer to the glib newspaper talk about a "crime wave" in Harlem. The crime goes far deeper than newspaper editors and real estate executives are prepared to admit. The crime is in the ghetto institution itself, bitter symbol of repression and discrimination and greed. The owners are shrewd. They prosper on suffering. Why not take a seven-room apartment that rents for fifty dollars a month to whites, cut it up into seven tiny apartments, rent these "kitchenettes" to Negroes for the "reasonable" sum of twenty-four dollars a month? The fifty-dollar apartment is now worth about $170. There is no competition; Harlem residents have to take what they get. And:

"The kitchenette is our prison, our death sentence without a trial, the new form of mob violence that assaults not only the lone individual, but all of us, in its ceaseless attacks.

"The kitchenette, with its filth and foul air, with its one toilet for thirty or more tenants, kills our black babies so fast that in many cities twice as many of them die as white babies. . . .

"The kitchenette blights the personalities of our growing children, disorganizes them, blinds them to hope, creates problems whose effects can be traced in the characters of its child victims for years afterward. . . .

"The kitchenette is the funnel through which our pulverized lives flow to ruin and

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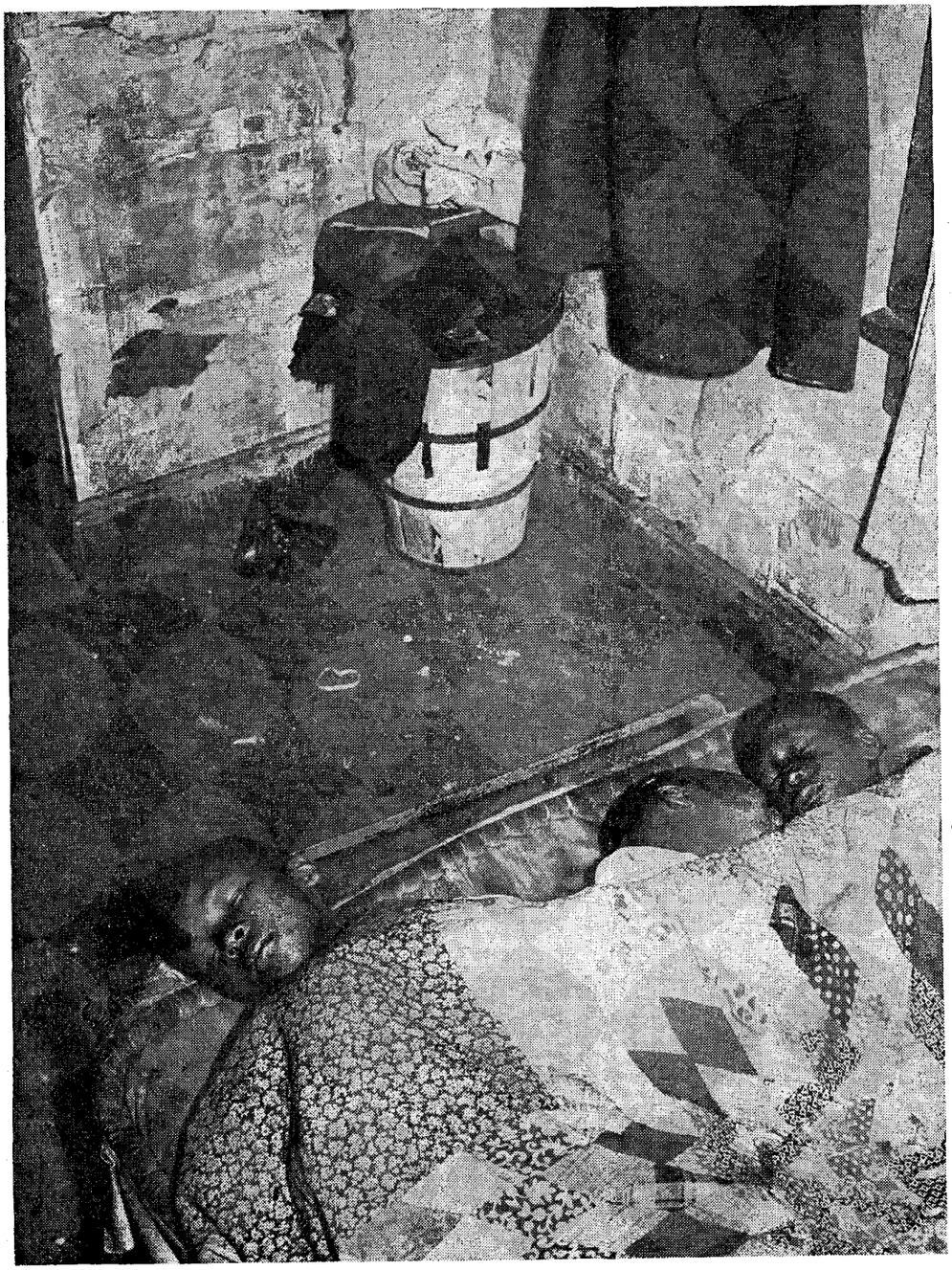

death on the city pavements, at a price. . . ." These are the headlines of a crime which does not come in "waves" but is the steady undertow of exploitation. Not the accused but the accuser is the criminal.

We are moving, says Wright at the end of the book, "into the sphere of conscious history." History, that is, which is understood, mastered, and directed by men for human purposes. "Voices are speaking. Men are moving! And we shall be with them. . . ." It is this hopeful determination which is the triumphant note of a narrative that unflinchingly records a thousand and one moments of defeat, humiliation, despair. In the last pages there is a strengthening of purpose; there is a prophecy of fulfillment.

The photographs accompanying the text (some of which are reproduced here) have been skillfully arranged by Edwin Rosskam so that there is a steady interplay of word and visual image. Most of the pictures were selected from the files of the Farm Security Administration. They show the Negro in both his rural and urban environment, at work, at play, in the home and school and church, on the picketline. I was disappointed that so few photos were included in the section on "Men in the Making," the last in the book. Both text and pictures might very well have been elaborated here, particularly with regard to the Negro industrial worker.

In *12 Million Black Voices,* Richard Wright has applied his brilliant talents as a novelist to a great historical theme. In heightening our understanding of the Negro people he has clarified our understanding of American life. For, as he says: "We black folk, our history and our present being, are a mirror of all the manifold experiences of America. What we want, what we represent, what we endure America *is*. If we black folk perish, America will perish. . . . The differences between black folk and white folk are not blood or color, and the ties that bind us are deeper than those that separate us. The common road of hope which we all have traveled has brought us into a stronger kinship than any words, laws, or legal claims. Look at us and know us and you will know yourselves, for *we* are *you,* looking back at you from the dark mirror of our lives!" And, in holding up this clear and meaningful mirror to America, Richard Wright has demonstrated again and with new intensity that he is one of the great, one of the truly great American artists of our time.

SAMUEL SILLEN.

Medicine's Odyssey

SOCIETY AND MEDICAL PROGRESS, *by Bernhard J. Stern. Princeton University Press. $3.*

DR. STERN has written a provocative and scholarly work on the historical currents that have determined medical progress. The author's basic concept in developing this subject is well stated in the summary of the book. "Medicine, both as a science and as a profession, is inextricably bound up with the social process and with scientific developments in other fields. . . . The traditional approach to the study of medicine as a unique discipline has, as a rule, violated reality by ignoring the essential and all-important relations of medicine with socio-economic conditions, with prevailing social attitudes, and with other scientific disciplines. . . . This book, therefore, does not attempt a chronological presentation of medical progress as a segment of experience abstracted from its surroundings. Rather, it deals with medicine functionally in its social and scientific setting."

The various chapters develop this point of view ably and with thorough documentation. First, the two parallel, independent traditions in the history of medicine are traced: the secular, scientific and the magico-religious, supernatural. The struggle between these opposing forces from Egyptian times, through Greek and Roman society, the cultural retrogression of the Middle Ages, and the progressive triumph of the scientific tradition in modern times are vividly described. Dr. Stern emphasizes that medicine, like other professions, was long a victim of the aristocratic attitude that working with one's hands was degrading. During this time it remained sterile and ineffectual. Laboratory work in the experimental sciences was disparaged. Actual contact with the patient was slight. Conflicts arose, especially in the Middle Ages, between the scholastic physician and the empiric, practical barber-surgeon. Gradually this conflict was resolved as the scientific and realistic approach in medicine prevailed.

In the chapter on the scientific foundations of medicine, in which the growth of the science of medicine is sketched, there is an historical and dialectical approach which is urgently needed in the whole field of medical history. To quote the author: "Spontaneous creation

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can no more explain medical discovery than it can the origin of life. An invention or a discovery is invariably a product of the intellectual, technical, scientific, and specifically medical traditions from which it emerges, and of the multitude of accretions, important and seemingly insignificant alike, which have preceded it. Certain specific medical discoveries are epoch-making in that they are milestones which mark new directions and paths for inquiry, diagnosis and treatment, but the road along these milestones cannot be ignored in realistic, as distinct from romantic, medical history. . . . These are variations in the importance of different discoveries and inventions in the field of medicine. The accumulation of knowledge is not gradual and continuous but is characterized by sudden spurts. Pending a particular discovery or one of a class of discoveries, further progress in a given field may be impossible. When the discovery is made and its meaning understood, developments follow rapidly if investigators apply themselves to cultivating its latent possibilities."

These fundamental dialectical principles must be used by all progressive students in the exploration of medical history. Only thus can a fine appreciation of medicine, both in the past and present, be reached, and the superficial concepts of the romantic, biographical school of medical history overcome. In this chapter Dr. Stern also develops briefly the interrelationship of medicine and other sciences — the influence of chemistry and physics and the indebtedness of medicine to the development of instruments of precision, such as the thermometer, electrocardiogram, ophthalmoscope, and X-ray.

Succeeding chapters trace the development of medical universities and academies, medical schools and the modern hospital, the effect of social change on them, and their influence on medical progress. The medical problems created by the development, under capitalism, of large cities are also discussed.

An important chapter is devoted to an analysis of the relationship between income and health. Startling statistics from the early nineteenth century on are given to show how poverty affects health. To quote only one of many studies, the National Health Survey in 1935 showed that members of families on relief suffered more than two and one-half times the volume of disability in all diseases combined, than do families with incomes of $5,000 and over. The ratio for specific diseases ranged from almost nine times in tuberculosis to 1.24 times in infectious diseases.

The chapter on medical advance and social progress analyzes the influence of medical progress on society in general. The increased life span has resulted in an aging of the population. This has brought new problems. To quote the author, "People do not want to live longer in order to be parasitic, although they are still strong physically and mentally. Nor do they wish to deprive youth of jobs. When they can no longer work, they ask for security deserved by their years of active labor, without imposing too much upon the limited budgets of the younger citizens. Grave challenges are inherent in the new situation which medical science has helped to produce by its increasing efficiency." The conquest of tropical diseases may have important political effects in its physical emancipation of colonial peoples. The conquest of epidemic disease has helped change the psychology of the world.

Finally, Dr. Stern discusses resistance to medical change, both in the past and present. Outstanding cases, such as the resistance to Harvey, Pasteur, Semmelweis, and Lister, are cited in detail. It is pointed out that this hostility to medical change is due to sociological and psychological forces, functioning both inside and outside the medical profession.

Throughout this timely and valuable book the historical approach is carried forward to the threshold of the contemporary scene. Dr. Stern does not attempt to deal with the social problems of medicine today. But, as he states in conclusion: "Through an analysis of medicine's changing role in society and a study of past resistances to medical progress, perspectives will be gained on contemporary controversies. If this is achieved, in even a small measure, the objectives of this book will have been realized." And they are achieved in large measure.

DAVID COSGROVE.

Personal Wilderness

BIRD OF THE WILDERNESS, *by Vincent Sheean. Random House. $2.50.*

IN *Bird of the Wilderness* Vincent Sheean furnishes a belated prologue to his *Personal History*. This novelized account of the author's adolescence is also a key to the later Sheean—to his analysis of himself against a background of wars, revolutions, and politics in general.

Bill Owen was seventeen years old in 1916, a year before America entered World War I. He had grown up in the Midwest, where "the summer of desperate heat follows the bitter winter with only a brief, wet interval between them to mark the place of spring." The town in which he lived, Parkerton, Ill., "contained one object lesson in freedom and slavery which no moderately intelligent or imaginative child could miss. Negroes were not allowed to live there . . . except old Johnston, the barber, who had been in Parkerton since long before the riots. . . . How could it be, then, that here in Lincoln's own country there was no freedom for the very people he had died to save?"

Bill's mother, Louisa, was German-born and had come to this country in her childhood; his father, a gusty American of Welsh ancestry, had abandoned Bill's mother when their son was only five. The boy was raised in a household that was German middle class in outlook. But Bill Owen felt himself different from his German relatives; he wasn't a good Lutheran and the sober, dull scheme of personal life didn't appeal to him.

The drive toward war, sweeping inward from the eastern seaboard, caught up Parkerton, too. It served to generate, to intensify, and finally to resolve the adolescent conflicts in young Owen's life as he left Parkerton to join the army. Leaving Parkerton at the same time, but going elsewhere, was the young school teacher, Saki Carpenter, who had encouraged Bill to read Chaucer. "The necessity of saying goodbye kept them often silent; when he held her in his arms he could feel the hot tears on her face. She was terrified of the embraces to which she yielded as if against her own will; they were too young and too ignorant, she kept telling him."

And thus the end of an adolescent chapter, very readable, and with some faint echoes of Floyd Dell's *Moon Calf*.

Young Bill was understandably confused; when his father came to Parkerton once, got drunk, and was thrown in jail, the boy was in a turmoil. He couldn't tell his mother about it. At this difficult time he needed help. His mind ran over all the people whom he knew, but not one invited trust—except Big Joe. Bill "had the impulse to tell Big Joe the whole story." He also felt that he could talk "with Mr. Johnston, the gentle and placid Negro barber." But Bill didn't really know Big Joe or Mr. Johnston well. Big Joe was a Bohemian miner who lived in a hill shack and he had once told Bill that World War I was an imperialist war. And so, young Bill got through it all somehow, without ever telling Joe.

And in the end, you find yourself thinking of Big Joe, the vague and friendly character on the other side of the tracks. Big Joe could have helped Bill—he was that kind of a guy. But even long afterward, when Bill Owen had seen lots more of the world and had told all about it in *Personal History* he could never bring himself to "go to Joe"—to the many fine, courageous Joes he encountered from China to France. In China he encountered Rayna Prohme and Madame Sun Yat-sen, in Morocco, Abd-el-Krim. He was given innumerable firsthand opportunities to observe and study people who were models of strength, will power, and plain decency as contrasted to a gallery of suave and brutal imperialist agents and ministers. There was no question in the mind of the later Owen—the "Owen" of *Personal History*—who the "right" people were. Yet they remained admirable, idealized, possibly envied—and always distant. He could eloquently prove that the "Joes" had the right idea. But at the tail end of his analysis he must retire, abase himself—"I'm not good enough, I need peace of mind, I like luxury and admit it," etc.

For Owen they always remain distant, admirable—and possibly envied. From the adolescent bewilderment of *Bird of the Wilderness* Owen graduated in *Personal History* to a more mature penetration of life—and yet there was always that perverse streak of confusion and reluctance to realize fully which, as revealed in *Bird of the Wilderness*, is the prologue and key to latter indecision.

ALFRED GOLDSMITH.

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PERFECT LANDING

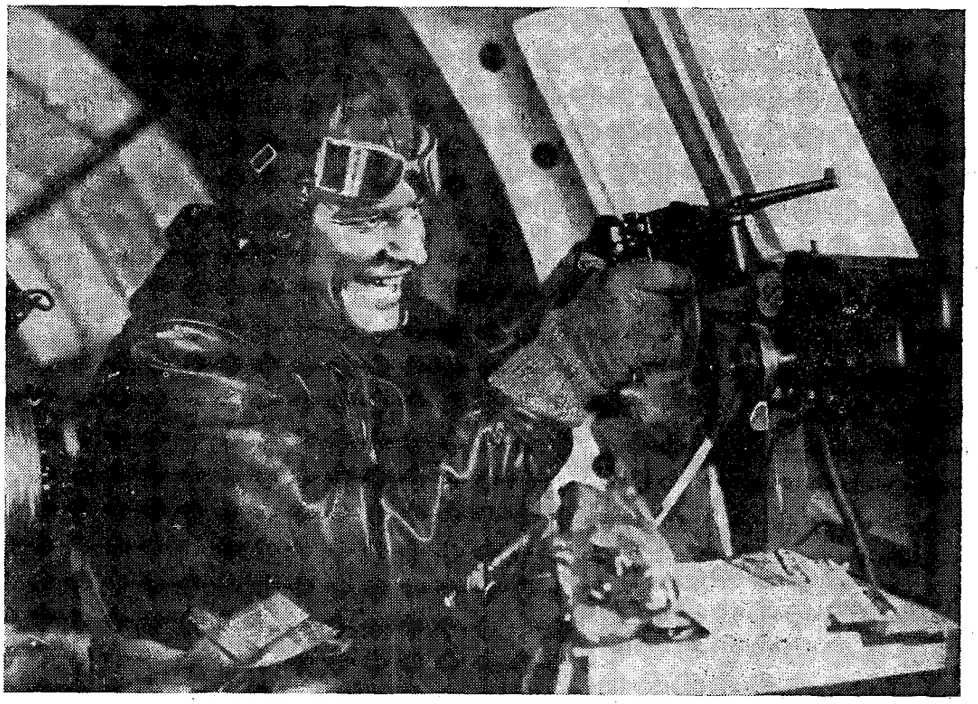
In "Wings of Victory" the Soviet Union has produced a great film on flying. The story of Valery Chkalov who flew over the North Pole. Reviewed by Joy Davidman.

FLYING is the splendid legend of our country. It is more poetic than the fall of Troy and more miraculous than the discovery of America. It has its heroic, lonely exploits in the upper air, its heartbreaking sacrifices, its slow years of concentrated work; beauty and horror and death; all the materials of which great art is made. But no music and no poem and no painting have as yet done justice to an airplane in flight or to the man who flies it. Only the camera has been able to catch the sweep and scope of flight, until aerial photography has become an art in itself. Films, here and elsewhere, have done the utmost in capturing the beauty of planes. Flying, however, is far more than the mere physical presence of a plane in the sky. So it has remained for the Soviets to produce the first great film on flying, because only the Soviet, only a socialist state, could understand that the man is more important than the plane.

Wings of Victory is the story of Valery Chkalov, who flew over the Pole; who was human enough for anybody's taste, but also a man being in a human world. This Soviet film, playing at New York's Stanley Theater, does not attempt to deify Chkalov. It does more; it traces his development from a romantic, moody individualist to a clear-headed and magnificent leader of socialism; and when he comes to his personal triumph, his wings bear 170,000,000 fellow workers with him.

Here is the young Chkalov, a man with a genius for flying, but a genius undisciplined and undirected. He has not yet found a goal equal to his ability; he has not learned how to live or how to serve the cause of life. In consequence, his genius dissipates itself in fantastic and purposeless air clowning, in rudeness and irritability. He must be forever chasing death to prove to himself that he is doing something worth while—that he's a real hero. As a Red Army pilot, he is brilliant, but, inevitably, spends most of his time in the guardhouse; his irresponsibility keeps him from being accepted by the Communist Party, and finally leads to his dismissal from the army.

Slowly, in the years that follow, he works toward a true understanding of himself and his place in society. It is not an easy process; as his wife puts it, he's cutting his teeth, and it hurts. As a test pilot, he gains happiness in pioneering for the Soviet's conquest of the air. His recklessness has some point, here; he feels his life is worth trading for an improved plane. But he still does not know how to live. At an air show his landing gear gets stuck; ordered to bail out, he prefers to go through ten minutes of incredible and dangerous stunting in order to loosen the gear and save the plane. By a miracle, he succeeds, and as he lands Stalin walks over quietly to congratulate him. Questioned by Stalin, Chkalov reveals the flaw in his philosophy—his overstressing of sensational individual heroism, coupled with his undervaluing the individual's real importance to society. Stalin's gentle reproof—"Your life is more valuable to us than any plane!" is a sudden illumination.



TARGET PRACTICE: *In this scene from the new Soviet film, "Wings of Victory," Valery Chkalov, in his trans-polar flight, takes a pot shot at the North Pole.*

Chkalov's reaction, at this point, is a masterpiece of psychological analysis. In his first wild exultation over his triumphs and honors, he translates Stalin's words with boyish literalness—he will live more fully, he'll be nicer to his wife, he'll give a party and invite everybody! But as his joy quiets down he recognizes that character cannot be changed by a bottle of champagne; he must find something worth while to do with his genius, something genuine to replace his sensationalism. "Without my tricks I'm not much!" he says ruefully, and, "I'm afraid of my character." It is at this moment that Chkalov's real maturity begins.

His old commander has been chosen to lead a flight to the Pole, and Chkalov sees in this his opportunity both for self-realization and significant work. There is, however, no room for him on the first expedition. The commander, through irresolution, crashes and is fatally injured. In the hospital he and Chkalov quietly discuss his failure, his coming death, and the triumphant flights which will come. This is the most extraordinary deathbed scene in film history; its unsentimental honesty about dying, its frustrated ambition for living, and the deep affection of the two men for each other combine to make a tragedy too big to cry over. Chkalov comes out, afterward, and starts plans for his own flight.

Now he has really found the purpose he exists for—his wings bear socialism into the sky. In a series of brilliant flights he opens the Stalin route, the unimaginable trans-polar pathway down to the American coast. He lands in San Francisco—and here the film has its most humorous moment in the Russian viewpoint on the somewhat curious reception we give visiting heroes. Why, oh why does everybody whistle? Chkalov stands it as long as he can, then whistles back; getting the idea, the whistlers change to cheering.

He comes home again, is about to test a new plane designed for round-the-world

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flight. "And after this?" his mechanic asks. "We've been everywhere, even America! Now we're going round the world. Where will you fly then?"

"Wherever the mind of man can go, we'll fly," says Chkalov, and takes off on his last flight.

Such a summary as this can trace the underlying thesis of the film; it cannot convey the warmth of the acting, the touches of character and humor which enliven it, the flashes of fantastic pictorial beauty. Episodes like the two scenes with Stalin deserve an essay in themselves. Crystallizing as they do the philosophy of life, the sense of socialist responsibility, toward which Chkalov is groping, they might easily have become oratorical or didactic. This is prevented skillfully by their quietness and gentleness, by the casual, unemphatic performance of M. Gelovani as Stalin, a beautiful bit of acting, and by the corresponding naturalness of the direction. You see a supreme moment, but, too, you see two men in friendly talk.

The entire cast is extraordinarily natural; as usual with Soviet films, you are not conscious of looking at actors at all. You are watching people live. Vladimir Belokurov, with the tremendously difficult and various moods of Chkalov to interpret, makes the man consistent and believable; sympathetic even when he's being something of a grouch. And this is done simply, with no ostentation of technique. Chkalov's flying companions—Vanin and Pasha the mechanic, Yarov and Beliakov, Boris Zhukovsky as the commander, and Berezov as Baidukov, from whose diary the film was adapted—are equally brilliant, with Zhukovsky, perhaps, the most remarkable. Zenia Tarasova contributes a warm and understanding portrait of Chkalov's wife.

The direction, the photography, and the musical score are not only admirable in themselves, but they achieve, in addition, the highest excellence for these things—they are unobtrusive. Similarly, there are no long passages of mere camera virtuosity, as too often in flight pictures, nor are there trick montages, trick lights, the whole repertoire of puerile and pathetic monkeyshines known as "special effects." There have been, perhaps, more beautiful shots made of planes than these—though certainly not often; there has been none more purposeful. And *Wings of Victory* is probably the first airplane film on record in which the "human interest" is not blond. . . . Oh, for Heaven's sake, go see it.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

Macbeth Again

A new production of the drama. . . . "The Land Is Bright"

CERTAINLY you will see the Evans-Anderson-Webster production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* while it is running at the National Theater. *Macbeth,* for all its literary quality, is still one of the Bard's most exciting and most moving dramas, and by that token, even a production by the junior girls of the Maplewood (N. J.) high school would be worth the price of admission.

This is not to say that the new production reaches no higher level. I suppose it is the best we can expect until there is a real national theater in America, a company of real actors.

For Shakespeare, even though he wrote in poetry, can and *must* be acted if he is to overcome the average reader's reluctance to listen to him on the stage. This reluctance springs from two important factors—the way in which the Bard was crammed down our throats in school and the way in which many performers have disregarded Shakespeare's own directions to his players:

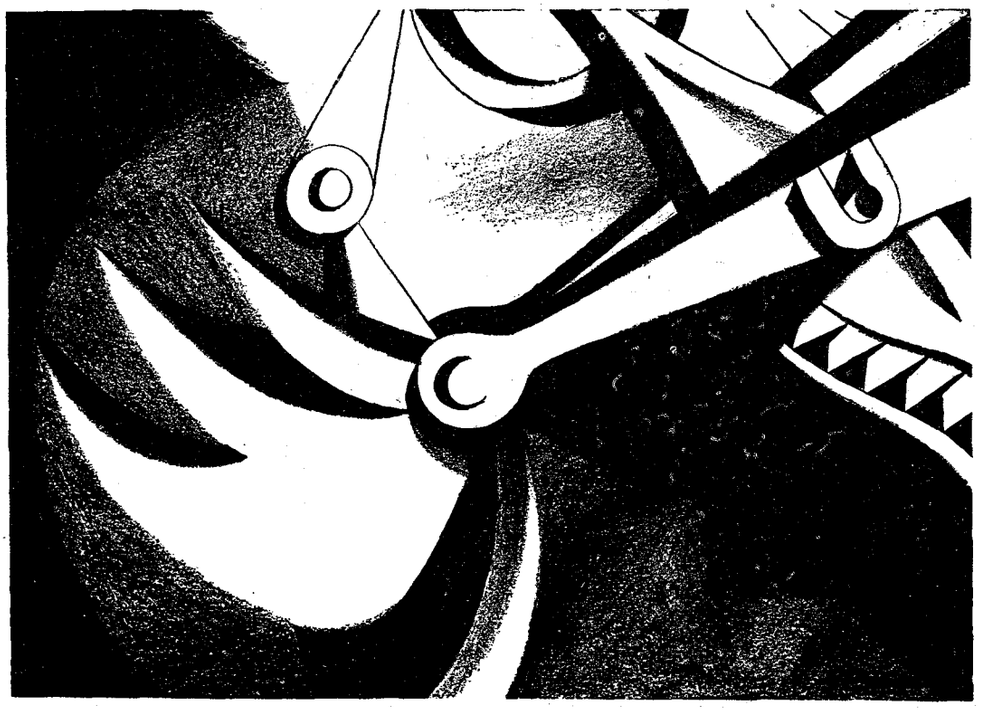
"Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand . . . Oh! it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwigpated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings . . . Suit the action to the word, the word to the action . . . Oh! there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly . . . that neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably."

Now, God save the mark (as Bill would say) Maurice Evans, while none too "robustious," is such a player. If he does not tear a passion to tatters, it can be said that he *does* nibble on it; he does strut and posture; he does spit (literally), and so far from suiting the action to the word and the word to the action, he merely takes a stance (when his sensitive nose scents a long and famous speech coming), and he delivers it.

It cannot be said that he does not deliver it well. He does. He is a paragon of articulation and what old-fashioned elocution teachers called "ejaculation." Everyone can hear him. He has a good voice and he is enamored of it; he reads his lines intelligently, so that you may understand what Shakespeare means. But he does not ACT. He merely recites. Some may care for recitation, but it is certain that Shakespeare himself did not care for it, for he gives every internal evidence of having been no small shakes as an actor himself.

This is why I do not like anything Maurice Evans does upon the stage. Study his performance in the title role of *Macbeth*—a role full of the juice of life, a man, a warrior, a complex human personality. Except for the "periwigpated" part, it is identical with his *Hamlet,* his *Richard II,* his anything. More pertinently, compare his *Macbeth* with the Porter in his own company—a small role played by a practically unknown person by the name of William Hansen. Mr. Hansen, save the mark, is an *actor*—he acts—he fills the skin of the Porter with the raw bones, blood and flesh of life. The moment he walks upon the stage, you know—this is a recognizable human being, whose like I have met many times before. He is speaking poetry and acting at the same time, which should prove to anyone that it *is* possible to speak poetry and act at the same time, not merely to take a pose and spill the poetry. Mr. Hansen should have more and bigger parts.

Or compare the *Macbeth* of Mr. Evans with the Macduff of Herbert Rudley—a man far too young and immature to really fill the role (which is demanding) but a performer, withal, who possesses an emotional quality Mr. Evans cannot reach in his wildest dreams. Or compare Mr. Evans with his sinful stage paramour, Miss Judith Anderson. In Miss Web-



STEAM SHOVEL, *a lithograph by A. Ajay*

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ster's hands, Miss Anderson does not reach the achievement of which she is manifestly capable—she is a woman of talent, and she possesses genuine passion; as such, she is far more credible as the wife of the ambitious Thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor who was king hereafter, than Mr. Evans is credible as a king, a Thane, a general in Duncan's army, a man torn between his o'erweening ambition and his human impulses. But enough of Mr. Evans. My heart goes out to him, especially when he comes to those lines about "a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more."

Margaret Webster has attempted by judicious cutting and shifts in tempo to speed the action of the play; she has achieved some success. Her handling of crowds is none too good, and we could dispense with the off-stage sound effects that are intended to conjure up an eerie atmosphere but that actually sound more like the Erie Railroad (really they do). The scenery of Samuel Leve is adequate, if uninspired, but the play's the thing. Please see *Macbeth* and listen to William Shakespeare—a man who understood many things about people and could express his understanding in resounding English that has no parallel upon this terraqueous sphere.

ALVAH BESSIE.

★

HAD *The Land Is Bright* been intended as merely another screwball comedy its theater tricks would not matter. But George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber, roused by the Nazi threat, have attempted to say some worthwhile things. They announce the unity of the American people; they declare, with sincerity that the world's free men must defeat Hitler if they are to remain free. Nothing, at the present time, is more worth saying, and saying well. So it is a pity that Kaufman and Ferber must say it with inept dialogue and clumsy characterization; with melodrama that tends to cheapen its subject.

The play's most obvious absurdity, perhaps, is its characterization. In dealing with the history of a capitalist family, it makes use of all the stock types of pantomime. Great-grandfather, the founder of the Kincaid house, is a robber baron; he declares as much at every opportunity. His wife is a social climber, and makes that equally clear. Personality they have none; one robs and the other climbs, and that is all. At one point, indeed, the robber baron and three cronies group themselves as if to break into a Gilbert and Sullivan chorus, and with evil glee declare their plans to loot the United States. There was a time when no stage villain was complete without mustache, leer, and a prompt declaration of dishonorable intentions; it is startling to find this naive tradition revived by the sophisticated Kaufman.

The second act is even more childish. Describing the Kincaids in the decadent twenties, it presents degenerate after degenerate, each of whom, like the Seven Deadly Sins in a medieval morality play, steps forward, announces his particular vice, and retires. Thus it is a

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little too much when, in the third act, we are asked to believe in the sudden and complete reform of the Kincaids.

The absurdity of all this is enhanced by the threadbare devices used to keep some sort of action going; in the first act there is actually a maiden aunt, stark mad in black bombazine, who wails in the hallways and lets in the enemy who shoots Great-Grandfather. There is a daughter sold to a fiendish fortune-hunting count, and a son who marches in with an ineligible wife. The murders keep piling up as the play progresses. And the one vital thing in *The Land Is Bright,* the entrance of a broken refugee from the Hitler terror, is managed theatrically as the far too neat climax of a political argument.

The dialogue, as Dr. Johnson said of another play, has not wit enough to keep it sweet. Kaufman is famous for wisecracks, and he has scattered funny lines here and there, but they are not enough to smother the cliches. At times it is unintentionally funny, as when the ex-countess describes, with shudders, the horrors of her life with the wicked old count; it seems the carriage never came when she rang for it.

What real praise this play earns is entirely due to its actors, an able group who labor mightily with their poor material. Phyllis Povah is outstanding as the first Kincaid's social-climber wife; Martha Sleeper matches her in brilliance in the role of the countess, especially in her middle, or gigolo period. Arnold Moss, who begins by giving personality to that trite Mephistopheles, Count Czarniko, and ends in a terrifying moment as the broken refugee, deserves better things. Jo Mielziner's settings are amusing, if a trifle overemphatic, and the direction clicks along. And Kaufman and Ferber have, at least, pointed their popgun in the right direction although they should have loaded it with real bullets.

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GOINGS ON

MARXIST ANALYSIS OF THE WEEK'S NEWS by Joseph Starobin, foreign editor, New Masses, Sun., Nov. 23, 8:30 P.M. Workers School, 50 E. 13 Street. Admission 25 cents.

FIFTH AVE. FORUM presents **MAX BEDACHT,** "The Fraternal Movement in a World at War," Sun., Nov. 23, 8 P.M. 77 Fifth Ave. Adm. 15c. Questions—Discussion.

WILLIAM BLAKE, author of "The Copperheads," speaks on "The Future Map of Europe" Sun., Nov. 23, 8:30 P.M., at 3200 Coney Island Ave.

SEE United American Artists' **EXHIBITION.** Also special $5-$25 section of original paintings, watercolors, prints. Adm. free—ACA Gallery, 26 W. 8 St.

transmission of the song, enlarged upon it and frequently added his own twist to the words. The inevitable result was the survival of the song in various corrupt forms.

Another interesting consequence of this oral transmission from one singer to another, from generation to generation, and even from one country to another, was that the personality of the individual author or composer was lost and that of a nation—or, at least, of a geographical section — substituted. A song by Schubert, sung from printed music always remains Schubert's. But even today, let a backwoodsman or a sharecropper invent a song and hand it on to others, and he immediately recedes into the background, his invention the property of those who sing it. In the very moment of transmission, it becomes a changing thing, influenced by every alteration of public mood or manners.

Keynote Recordings blazes the folk song trail with two new significant releases. Paul Robeson and the Chinese Workers' Chorus, directed by Liu Liang-mo, present "Chee Lai! (Arise)," an album of delightful Chinese folk tunes as well as militant soldier, farmer, and workers' songs. The music employs the pentatonic, or five tone scale, and along with the lyrics, reflects the life and aspirations of a spirited people and is delivered in stirring fashion by both soloist and chorus. Robeson, as usual, is magnificent and the choral group, consisting of young Chinese boys and girls who work in laundries, restaurants, and printing shops demonstrates that here is a real people's chorus. (Keynote, $2.75)

Richard Dyer-Bennet should prove to your satisfaction that the art of minstrelsy is not dead. Presented for the first time on records by Keynote, Mr. Dyer-Bennet makes an auspicious debut with familiar English county songs and ballads, several rollicking New England sea chanteys, and an infectious nineteenth century Australian bush song "The Swag Man," which may yet sweep the country under its subtitle "Waltzing Matilda." Mr. Dyer-Bennet, accompanying himself on the Swedish lute, is a newcomer who sings with a twinkle in his eye. His charming voice and captivating rhythm will set you waltzing. (Keynote, $2.75)

"Smoky Mountain Ballads" are in no sense the kind of songs Broadway mountaineers have inflicted upon us. These songs, presented by Victor, collected by John A. Lomax, are sung with authenticity by Smoky Mountain people. The singers perform in a direct, straightforward manner, with no conscious effort at expression, and sing love songs or the story of a deer race with equal facility and charm. This reviewer has worn his copy of "Intoxicated Rat" to a frazzle. (Victor, $3.00)

In John Jacob Niles' third volume of "American Folk Lore," recently issued by Victor, Mr. Niles employs his tenor voice to remarkable advantage in lilting tunes like "One Morning in May" and haunting melodies like "Black Is the Color of My True Love's Hair." You will find some of the texts surprisingly and delightfully frank. (Victor, $3.75)

We can dismiss the new album set "English Folk Songs and Ballads" by G. Marston Haddock as the product of an uninspired singer. Mr. Haddock, who offers well known tunes with a strained delivery, would profit by studying the Niles and Dyer-Bennet recordings. (Musicraft, $3.50)

MICHAEL AMES.

PROGRESSIVE'S ALMANAC

"PROGRESSIVE'S Almanac" is a calendar of meetings, dances, luncheons, and cultural activities within the progressive movement. This list is published in connection with NEW MASSES' Clearing Bureau, created for the purpose of avoiding conflicting dates for various affairs. Fraternal organizations, trade unions, political bodies, etc., are urged to notify NEW MASSES Clearing Bureau of events which they have scheduled. Service of the Clearing Bureau is free. A fee of one dollar per listing will be charged for all affairs listed in this column.

NOVEMBER

20—(Thanksgiving Night) United American Artists, Camouflage Ball, Manhattan Center.

22—New Theater of Manhattan, Opening Night, "Showdown," Transport Hall.

22—Y. C. L., Annual Dance — Royal Windsor.

23.—I. W. O., Nat'l Folk Festival, Reflecting Democratic Culture of Peoples Fighting Fascism, 2 P.M., Manhattan Center.

29—New Theater League, Testimonial to Earl Robinson, Town Hall.

DECEMBER

1—Local 802—Amer. Fed. of Musicians—5th Annual Ball—Bands on Parade, Manhattan Center.

3-7—Oklahoma Committee to Fight Syndicolism Cases, Art Auction and Sale, Puma Galleries.

6—NEW MASSES, 30th Annual Artists and Writers Ball, Webster Hall.

13—Workers School, Fall Dance, Irving Plaza.

17—Committee of Jewish Writers and Artists in U. S., meeting, greeting to Jews in USSR—Madison Square Garden.

21—NEW MASSES meeting, "Six Months of the War," place to be announced.

24—(Christmas Eve) Veterans of the Lincoln Brigade, Ball, Manhattan Center.

25—(Christmas Night). Young Theatre Players—opening, "Emperors New Clothes," Heckscher Theatre.

31—(New Year's Eve) Advertising Guild, Mad Arts Ball, Manhattan Center.

JANUARY

17—NEW MASSES, Cross-section of American Folk Culture, Carnegie Hall.

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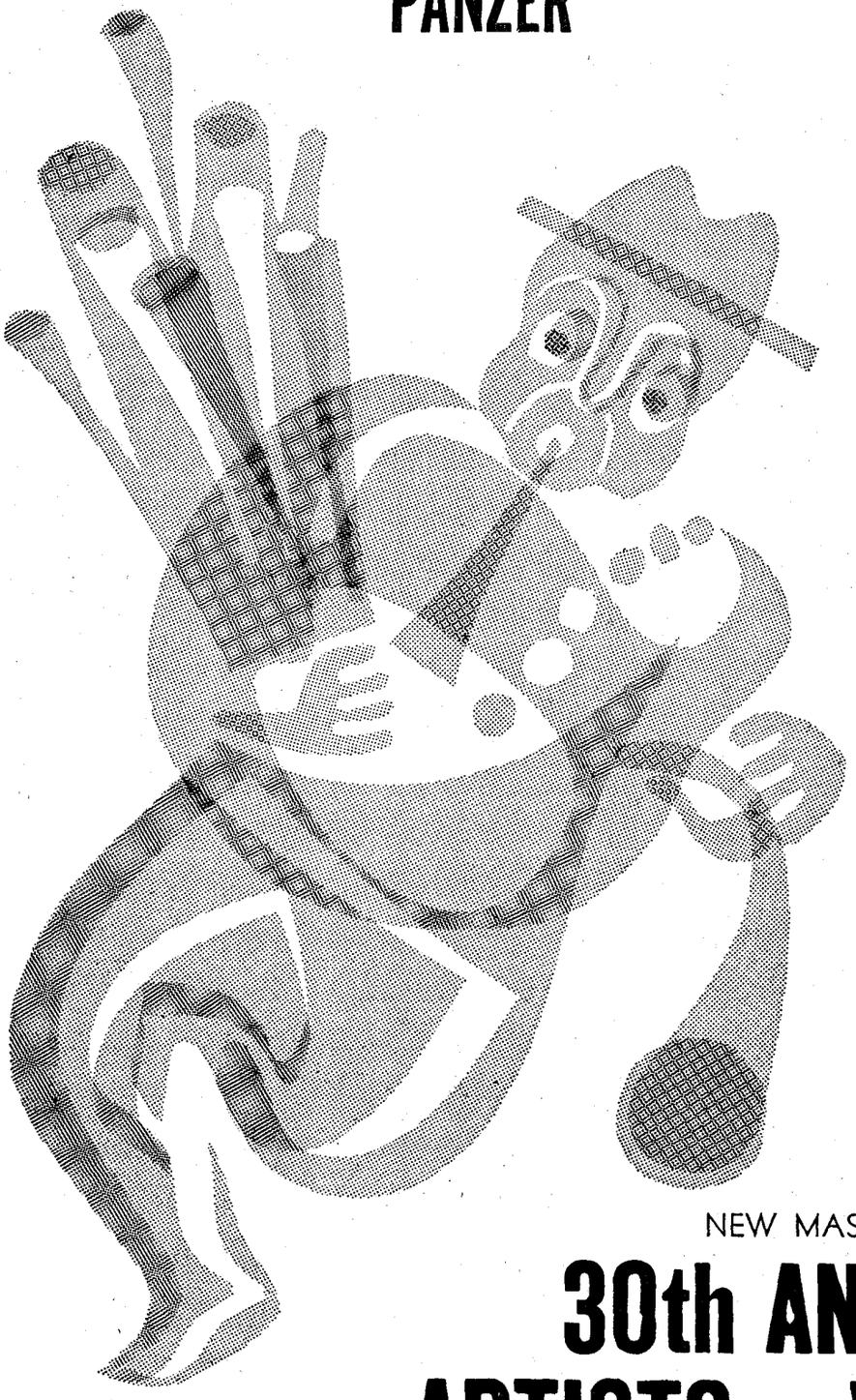

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